



THE
CASE AGAINST
HOME RULE

BY

L. S. AMERY, M.P.

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BY

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THE CASE AGAINST HOME RULE.

FOREWORD.

For the third time in less than a generation a Liberal Government is about to introduce a Home Rule Bill. The actual provisions of the measure will not be known for some weeks. But there is no reasonable doubt that it will be substantially the same measure as that introduced in 1886 or in 1893. That is to say, it will be a Bill to hand over the "peace, order, and good government" of Ireland to the Nationalist Party, subject to certain restrictions and safeguards. Those restrictions will, apparently, include the control of the Irish Customs and Excise by the Imperial Parliament, and, no doubt, most of the other matters reserved from the purview of the Irish Parliament by the two previous Bills, *e.g.*, foreign affairs, defence, external trade, coinage, copyright, patents, and possibly posts. The safeguards, whatever precise form they may take on paper, will resolve themselves in practice into the power of the Imperial Parliament to enforce its own wishes or the decisions of the Privy Council by armed force. This much has already been made clear by Mr. Churchill's Belfast speech, from which we can further conclude that some Irish members will be kept at Westminster; that there will be no Irish contribution to Imperial expenditure; but that, on the contrary, Irish land purchase and Irish old-age pensions are to be paid for by the taxpayers of Great Britain.

There may be other minor variations. But the essential character of the Bill will be the same as that

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of its predecessors. It must be the same, because the determining motive is still the same. And that motive is the dependence of the Liberal Government upon the Nationalist vote for its continuance in office. It will, consequently, like its predecessors, be a measure shaped, not by any guiding principle, but by political tactics, a due adjustment between the maximum strain which the Government can venture to impose on its more conscientious or more timid supporters, and the minimum which Mr. Redmond can persuade his followers to accept as an instalment of their demand for national independence. The principle of Colonial autonomy, and the totally different principle of Colonial federalism, will no doubt both be freely invoked on Liberal platforms as arguments for Home Rule. But the Bill itself will not square with either of these principles. It is not meant to square with them. It is meant to square votes. It is not being framed to work in Ireland. It is being framed to work in the lobby of the House of Commons.

And if the motive for introducing a Home Rule Bill is the same, so likewise is the manner of its introduction. From first to last, the Liberal advocacy of Home Rule has been furtive and equivocal. Mr. Gladstone's efforts to secure a majority independently of the Nationalists at the election of 1885, his secrecy and evasion during the next few months, his disingenuous assurances to hesitating colleagues, all preceding the sudden springing of his first Home Rule Bill upon the Cabinet and upon the House of Commons, are matters of history. As for those Liberals with whom personal or party loyalty outweighed all other considerations on that occasion, it cannot be said that they have since shown any remarkable enthusiasm for the Home Rule idea. Neither at the 1892 election, nor during the months that followed the introduction of the Bill of 1893, nor at the 1895 election was there any excessive anxiety to keep Home Rule in the foreground in the country. And if in 1893 the Liberal majority voted obediently

in the House of Commons, it was generally believed that their action was not uninfluenced by the consoling certainty that the Bill would be rejected by the House of Lords. For the next fifteen years after 1895 Home Rule was the skeleton in the Liberal cupboard, and the chief concern of Liberals was to assure the public either that the skeleton was there no longer, or at any rate that the cupboard door was to be kept locked. The elections of 1910 restored the political balance of 1886 and 1893, and with it brought back Home Rule. But up to the last the Government, from the Prime Minister downwards, have endeavoured to burke all discussion of the issue. With the exception of the stilted and empty rhetoric of Mr. Churchill, and the still vaguer generalities of the Solicitor-General some weeks ago, there has been not the slightest pretence at even stating a case for Home Rule during these last two years, let alone of giving any clear indication of the character of the measure contemplated. That a Home Rule Bill is coming is a thing to be deduced, not from Ministerial election addresses or Ministerial speeches, but from the facts of the political situation.

The one concern, indeed, of the Government has been, not to argue the case for Home Rule before the people, but to take measures to prevent the people having any opportunity of being consulted in the matter at all. It is for this purpose that the British Constitution has been suspended by the Parliament Act, and is to remain suspended, at any rate until the bargain with Mr. Redmond has been carried out and the United Kingdom has been broken up without the consent of its citizens. The Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 were the outcome of a political manœuvre. The Bill of 1912 is that, and more than that. It is the assertion of a new and lawless tyranny, a tyranny acquired by reckless demagoguery and maintained by backstairs cabals.

It is essential, throughout the discussion of the Home Rule Bill, to remember that the character of the Bill,

the manner of its introduction, the arbitrary method by which it is proposed to carry it into effect, are all the outcome of its tainted origin. To-day, as in 1886 and in 1893, Home Rule, as far as the Government and the bulk of its supporters are concerned, represents not a political theory or a conviction, but a log-rolling intrigue—the same old intrigue on which the nation has twice passed the same emphatic verdict. And upon that intrigue, come what may, it must be given the right to pronounce again.

But if the mere political manœuvre is still the same, every other circumstance affecting the discussion of the Irish problem has been completely transformed in the course of the last twenty years. It is, in the first place, an entirely different Ireland that is in question. Ireland thirty years ago was in the throes of a complete economic breakdown, due to falling prices and American competition. In the peculiar circumstances of Irish land tenure that breakdown resolved itself into a bitter struggle between landlord and tenant, each endeavouring to transfer the burden of loss upon the other. Home Rule, regarded by the tenants as an instrument to free themselves from the burden of rent, was a real and passionate demand. But since then Mr. Wyndham's Land Act has shown that that very demand for free tenure can be met under the Union, and, indeed, only through the credit of the Union. Agriculture, throughout the British Isles, after touching bottom some years ago, is once again on a stable and even progressive footing. In Ireland the revival has been exceptionally marked, partly owing to the absolute protection which the Irish store-cattle industry has enjoyed in the British market since 1900, and partly owing to the work both of Government Departments and of that wonderful triumph of individual initiative and insight, the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, in improving the methods of Irish agricultural production. With prosperity has come an indifference to Home Rule, reflected both in the falling off of sub-

For: Union will help tenants

British helped improve Irish agriculture

scriptions to the Nationalist Parliamentary Fund and in the disposition to criticise and reject any specific proposal for Home Rule. And with that indifference to Nationalism in the narrower sense there are everywhere signs of the development of a real national spirit, a spirit of pride in Ireland, a desire to make the most of its resources and of all who live within its confines, in which lies the best hope of future reconciliation. Meanwhile the Nationalist Party, retaining its control of the political machine, largely by help of contributions from those Irishmen oversea who still see Ireland through the spectacles of thirty and sixty years ago, has become an anachronism. It is a kind of Manchu Dynasty, representing a political and moral force that once was real, but which is now only a tradition and a pretence, and on the strength of that pretence claiming to settle the destiny of Ireland and of the United Kingdom.

The change in Irish conditions and in the outlook of the Irish people is itself largely the reflection of a far wider change in the whole theory and conception of national life among our people. When Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Home Rule Bill, the theory of *laissez faire* was still absolutely dominant. In whose hands wealth accumulated, or where it might choose to concentrate, whether within or without the national boundaries, was regarded as a matter outside the purview of the State. To-day that theory is completely abandoned. Methods, indeed, may differ. But all parties are agreed in principle as to the duty of the State to see to the social well-being of all its citizens, and to the full development of all its territories. Derelict classes or derelict areas within the community are no longer regarded as natural and unavoidable phenomena. Ireland has already felt the effects of the new conception in almost every department of her national life. The series of Land Acts, the work of the Congested Districts Board, and of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, the grants for

Irish labourers' cottages, have all been measures specifically devised to level up Irish conditions with English. The grant of Old Age Pensions, on the other hand, while general in its scope, has, owing to the excess of old persons, and to the greater extent of poverty, had a far wider and more beneficial effect in Ireland than anywhere else.

In one field of activity alone, that of national trade, the new conception has not yet been applied. But Free Trade, artificially kept alive by party politics and party traditions, is doomed, and will make its disappearance for good and all at the next change of Government. The bearing of this fact upon the Home Rule question is profound. It means that if the Union is maintained, not only will the revenue of the United Kingdom continue to be devoted to the task of levelling up Ireland, but that the United Kingdom tariff will also be specifically framed with a view to the increase of Ireland's productive wealth. But the rational idea is essentially exclusive; it aims at giving the citizens of the State a preference over all outside the State. If Ireland and Great Britain become separate political communities—and Home Rule, whatever the paper restrictions or guarantees may be, will lead to that—they will not only have different standards of social legislation, but different tariffs. To British trade that might mean a partial exclusion from a large and growing market. To Ireland, even if she received a preference equal to that granted to Canada or Australia, it would mean disaster, a complete check upon the hopes of development that now seem so fair. In 1886 the chief object of the State was thought to be security from external danger and good government at home. Unionists objected to Home Rule because they believed it would weaken the United Kingdom as a Great Power, and because they believed the Nationalists would misgovern Ireland. But beyond these arguments—neither of which could be expected to appeal to Nationalists—there was really no

reason for believing that either Ireland or Great Britain would suffer direct loss from Home Rule. The situation that now confronts us is very different. The old arguments still apply. But beyond and above them is the new factor that while Union means an immense development of the whole United Kingdom, and especially of Ireland, in the near future, Home Rule means a serious blow to British trade, and a crippling calamity to Ireland.

There is yet another conception which has grown up since 1886 which completely alters the perspective in which Home Rule must be viewed—the conception of Imperial Unity. Up to the 'Eighties the whole tendency in the Empire had been centrifugal. Colonial autonomy had been extended, not with any clear plan for eventual federal reconstruction, but, if anything, in the belief that autonomy would prove a stepping-stone towards peaceful separation. To provide for the autonomy and eventual complete separation of Ireland was, logically, only an extension of the same idea. But the application of this logic to the United Kingdom itself was too much even for those who, like John Bright, believed in it for the Empire. The fight for the Union was the beginning of an immense reaction against separatism in all its forms, and lent weight and force to the academic interest in Imperial Unity, which had been awakened by the writings of Seeley and Froude. The reaction showed itself in Canada in 1891 in the rejection of American Commercial Reciprocity, with its then openly avowed corollary of annexation. It showed itself more emphatically in the South African War. The federation of the Australian Colonies, the complete fusion of the South African Colonies in a Union deliberately modelled on that of the United Kingdom, were only further stages in the process of Imperial reconstruction.

To-day the great problem confronting the British peoples is the devising of some effective and stable Union for dealing with the common affairs of the

Empire. Upon that problem Home Rule has no direct constitutional bearing. Whether, in the federation that has yet to be devised, the British Isles enter as one unit or as two units, as a compact unit like South Africa or as a federalised unit like Canada, will not directly affect the purely constitutional problem. But Separatist Home Rule—and the Government scheme is by its very origin bound to be that—does involve serious practical difficulties in the way of Imperial Union. The whole tendency of Imperial development has been to diminish the number of units of the future federation, and to make each unit cover the whole of a geographical and economic area. To break up the United Kingdom, or to break up Canada, would introduce a host of practical difficulties. Above all, while success in solving the Irish problem will have the very best influence on the prospects of Imperial Unity, failure in that respect will involve a disastrous set-back; and, in the writer's opinion, Union alone can spell success.

There is lastly one other factor present in the situation to-day which was not present, in anything like the same degree, in 1886 or 1893—namely, the factor of external danger. While the permanent safety of the Empire can only be based on the unity and development of the Empire as a whole, and while in this sense the problem of Ireland is only a secondary one compared with that of Imperial Union, yet in the near future the fate of the Empire may have to depend almost entirely upon the effective organised strength of the United Kingdom. No one can contend that for the purposes of a supreme effort in war Home Rule can add to our fighting strength. Pitt realised its disadvantages to the full in the great war with France. But the situation of the near future may well resemble much more closely that of the closing years of the eighteenth century than that of thirty years ago.

These are the general considerations which it is necessary to keep in mind throughout the whole discussion of Home Rule, and it is with these considera-

tions in view that the articles which follow will be written. In these articles I propose first of all to touch briefly upon the past history of the problem, and then to go on with what I believe to be its true solution before dealing either with the arguments advanced for Home Rule or with the consequences that are likely to follow from it. Twenty years ago it was natural, in arguing the case against Home Rule, to begin by stating its disadvantages as compared with the existing state of things, and then, at the end, to suggest the possibility of ameliorative efforts under the Union. To-day, Ireland is a country of progress, and, given the maintenance of the Union, on the eve of an unexampled period of national development. It seems to be essential that we should first have a clear conception of all that Ireland can attain to under the Union before we contrast it with the disastrous results which must follow from separation.

II. - IRELAND BEFORE THE UNION.

In every essential respect Ireland is an integral part of a larger unit, the United Kingdom. Geographically, the British Isles form a single clearly-defined island group. As compared with other similar groups, such as Japan or New Zealand, a striking feature of the United Kingdom is its compact shape, due to the fact that its two main islands lie alongside of each other. To realise the political significance of this feature it is enough to bear in mind that there is no part of Ireland as distant or inaccessible from the main political and industrial centres of the main island as the Northern Highlands, not to speak of the Shetlands or Outer Hebrides. Economically, Ireland is a no less integral part of the British economic system. Belfast, with its textiles and shipbuilding, is one with Manchester or

Glasgow, while the whole of agricultural Ireland lives upon the British market. The immense market Great Britain offers to Irish produce, and the fact that Ireland contains hardly any coal or other industrial minerals in workable quantities, make any economic separation ruinous to the smaller and less richly-supplied island. Racially, Ireland is peopled with the same mixture of Celtic and Teutonic elements as the main island. Norseman and Dane, Anglo-Norman and English, Highland and Lowland Scotch, have all combined in various proportions with the original Celtic inhabitants to make up the Ireland of to-day. Even the so-called Celtic population of Ireland, more correctly speaking the Roman Catholic population, is far more English, both in blood and in speech, than that of Wales or the Highlands. Nor has Ireland, politically, ever constituted a separate organised unit in the sense, for instance, that Scotland undoubtedly did for six or seven centuries. At no time in the centuries of struggle between native chiefs, and between native Irish and Danes, which preceded the landing of Strongbow in 1169, had anything like an organised Irish State or Irish nation emerged. From that time onwards Ireland, though not reduced to any real order for centuries, remained under the English Crown.

Given this essential, natural, and historical unity of the British Isles, how are we to account for the existence of a specific Irish problem, and of a party imbued with the idea of political separation as the solution of that problem? The answer is to be found in the history of the last three and a half centuries, a history in which political, religious, and economic factors have continuously conspired to prevent the normal development of Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom, and to create in Ireland itself that traditional conception, upon which Irish Nationalism is based, of England as a malign and blighting influence upon Irish life, and of the British connection as the source of every ill from which Ireland has ever suffered.

In the great struggle of the Reformation Ireland was for over a century the base and battleground of the Catholic cause in the British Isles. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the struggle was waged mercilessly on both sides. When it ended the losers paid the full penalty. The Catholic population, whether of English or Irish origin, were dispossessed of most of their lands. Over a great part of Ulster they had actually been ousted to make way for Scotch and English settlers; elsewhere they remained as tenants, or rather tributaries, of the Protestant landlords who had acquired their confiscated estates. Politically they were completely disfranchised. Of the Protestant population, the greater part of the Ulster settlers were under the political and social disabilities imposed on Dissenters after the Restoration. All political power and social privilege were vested in the small minority which belonged to the Established Church. Through the Parliament in Dublin, and through the official class surrounding the Lord Lieutenant, this minority governed Ireland. It was a Government which memories of the past, fears for the future, and a narrow self-interest combined to make oppressive and tyrannous. Typical of its spirit was the infamous Penal Code, by which Catholics were subjected to every conceivable grave disability or petty persecution, and which Burke summed up as being "a machine . . . as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

For such a condition of things there was only one real remedy, the substitution of a Government whose views should be based on a broader outlook, and free from local prejudice and sectional interest. And under the circumstances such a Government could only be secured through full political union with England and Scotland. Years afterwards Adam Smith stated the case for union in a passage as applicable to Ireland in the first quarter of the eighteenth century as in the

last, and in essence as applicable to-day as two centuries ago :—

By the Union with England the middling and inferior ranks of people in Scotland gained a complete deliverance from the power of an aristocracy which had always before oppressed them. By an Union with Great Britain the greater part of people of all ranks in Ireland would gain an equally complete deliverance from a much more oppressive aristocracy; an aristocracy, not founded, like that of Scotland, in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune, but in the most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices—distinctions which more than any other animate both the insolence of the oppressors and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed, and which commonly render the inhabitants of the same country more hostile to one another than those of different countries are. Without a Union with Great Britain the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people.

Ireland had, indeed, been united with Great Britain by Cromwell. But his work was undone at the Restoration, and, till Pitt's day, no British or Irish statesman was found great enough to endeavour to restore it. In 1703, at the time of the negotiations for Union with Scotland, the Irish Parliament had asked to be admitted to the Union, and the request was repeated in 1707. But British statesmen, unwilling to saddle themselves with Irish problems at Westminster or to admit Ireland to the fiscal advantages of Union, disregarded the appeal. Ireland was left to the domination of a narrow caste, and every wound inflicted by the Civil Wars was kept open for a century, to vex generations to follow. It is to separatism—in other words, to Home Rule—in the eighteenth century that Ireland owes the bitterness of the political, religious, and agrarian conflict of the first century of Union. To return to separatism

now would be to revive and stereotype again for generations the feud that is so near its peaceful extinction.

But if Home Rule in the eighteenth century meant oppression to the Catholics, it was very far from bringing prosperity to the Protestants or even to the ruling caste. The Home Rule Government in Dublin depended for its existence upon British bayonets, and the price of that dependence was subordination to a general control by the British Government, and, more particularly, to a control over Ireland's external trade. And that control was directed not to the encouragement but to the repression of Ireland's economic activities. Political resentment, fear of Irish prosperity being once again used by the Crown as an instrument against British liberty, may have played an unconscious part in shaping some of the regulations by which Irish trade was harassed or suppressed. But, in the main, they were the natural and inevitable outcome of political separation, given the economic policy of the time, and the economic conditions of the two islands. England and Ireland in the eighteenth century were much more alike in their general economic conditions than to-day. Consequently, there was no department in which Ireland showed signs of progress in which she did not compete with some British interest enjoying representation in the supreme Parliament from which she was excluded. Her shipping, her woollen industry, her promising beginnings of cotton, glass, brewing, and sugar-refining industries, were forbidden all external outlet. Only the linen industry, which competed less directly with any British vested interest, was intermittently encouraged. Had Ireland been a producer of raw cotton, coffee, or sugar, of timber, pitch, or furs, in other words, of complementary and not of competitive wares, she would not have suffered by British control of her trade. As it was, she was in the position of "least favoured" Colony, and the very fact of her essential economic unity with Great Britain made her exclusion from the Union all the more disastrous.

The policy of restriction was, naturally, even more unpopular with the Protestant manufacturers and traders in Ireland, against whose industries it was directed, than with the Catholic peasants, who were only affected indirectly. England's weakness in the American Revolutionary War offered an opportunity, and, under the menace of the Ulster Volunteers, the restrictions on Irish foreign and Colonial trade were removed in 1779. In 1782 the full independence of the Irish Parliament was acknowledged, and, subject to such control as bribery and patronage enabled the British Crown to exercise, the little ruling caste in Ireland posed for a while as an independent allied nation.

From the economic point of view the change from Home Rule without control of Customs to Home Rule with control of Customs, to use the terminology of the present day, was all to the good. The Irish Parliament showed itself eager to foster industry by bounties, and, where it could do so without fear of retaliation, by increased duties against British goods. On the whole, the years following 1782 were years of increasing prosperity and development in Ireland. But the development was faced with serious limitations. The value of the trade with foreign countries, subject, as it was, to British competition, was a small matter compared to access to the British market, and in that market Ireland was still confronted with almost prohibitive tariffs. Even the home market could not be protected effectively against British competition without inviting reprisals against Irish linen and other staples of Irish trade with England. The fact is that fiscal independence, with its normal corollary of fiscal exclusion, can be of little use, and may be only injurious, where the essential economic dependence is as complete as it was in the case of Ireland then or is to-day. If Grattan's Parliament had lasted, it could not have saved Irish industries from the overwhelming competition of British industries when the era of machinery came in, and its efforts might only have narrowed the British market to Irish agri-

culture. Given the natural economic conditions of England and Ireland, a Customs union was then, as it is now, the most advantageous policy for the weaker State. But Customs union, as the fate of Pitt's Commercial Propositions showed, is impossible without political union.

In every other respect the Irish Parliament was a ruinous failure. The attempt of the Ascendancy clique to pose as a sovereign nation would have been absurd at any time. Coming as it did, on the eve of the French Revolution, and of the great war which followed, it was disastrous. From the first the Irish Parliament required the prop of British bayonets against internal disorder. Coercion Acts followed each other in rapid succession. A widespread revolutionary movement culminated in a futile peasant rising. Attended with every savage excess, and still more savagely repressed by the terrified Irish authorities, the rebellion of 1798 only completed the work of a century of separatism in re-inflaming every wound left unhealed since the Civil Wars. Three attempts at French invasion followed. What had been a farce had become an intolerable danger and a public disgrace. Pitt, anxious to do justice to the oppressed Catholics, and determined to put an end to the menace on England's flank, pressed forward the long-inevitable Union. In 1800 the necessary and customary expenditure in bribes secured the passing of the Act of Union by the Irish Parliament.

The Irish Parliament died, as it lived, in corruption. Some of its members protested eloquently on behalf of its dignity and of Irish independence, and ventured to defend the existing state of affairs. It is sufficient to quote Lord Clare's answer in the great speech delivered by him in the Irish House of Lords:—

Is the dignity and independence of Ireland to consist in the continued depression and unredeemed barbarism of the great majority of the people, and the factious contentions of a puny and

rapacious oligarchy, who consider the Irish nation as their political inheritance? "We are very well as we are." Look to your civil and religious dissensions—look to the fury of political faction, and the torrents of human blood that stain the face of your country, and of what materials is that man composed who will not listen with patience and goodwill to any proposition that can be made to him for composing the distractions, and healing the wounds, and alleviating the miseries of this devoted nation?

Outside Parliament the people at large, and more particularly the Catholics, seem to have welcomed the Union. Such by-elections as were fought during the crisis resulted in triumphant victories for the Unionists, largely through the influence of the Church. Yet a sense of resentment and regret lingered in some quarters in the old ascendancy class, among whom a real, though strictly exclusive, quasi-national feeling had developed during the century of separation. Gradually, with an inconsequence with which history, and Irish history above all, is only too familiar, that resentment blended into the general volume of Irish grievances against England, and became one of the main threads of a Nationalist tradition, whose other threads go back to the Civil Wars and to the century of oppression by that very same ascendancy whose end it now deplores. With the lapse of time a halo of Irish Nationalist patriotism has come to invest the "puny and rapacious oligarchy" which was bought out at the Union, and the Nationalist Party to-day looks back with equal reverence to the "patriot" Catholic peasants who rose in the rebellion of 1798, and to the "patriot" Protestant landlords who provoked that rebellion by their factious intrigues and their misgovernment, and then suppressed it with such ferocity. All that is interesting or dramatic in the story of Grattan's Parliament has been appropriated for the Nationalist cause—its misdeeds and follies have been relegated to the wider catalogue of Ireland's wrongs at the hands of England.

III.—FROM THE UNION TO THE HOME RULE BILLS.

By the Act of Union, Pitt and Castlereagh cut away the main root of all the troubles from which Ireland had suffered. The troubles themselves remained. The deep gulf between Protestant and Catholic remained as unbridged as it had been a century before. The land system was still, in substance and in the sentiments of the people, what it had been in its origin, a system of tribute based on conquest; only in external legal forms did it bear any resemblance to the co-operation between capital and effort which prevailed in England. The demoralisation of the Penal Laws had eaten the heart out of the Catholic population. Industry and commerce had paid to the full the penalty of Ireland's exclusion from the British national organisation. Whatever the Union might do, it could not in the twinkling of an eye undo all the deadening effects of the century of unnecessary and unnatural separatism which had passed.

That the Union was only the first step in a great task of political and economic reconstruction no one realised better than the statesmen who carried it through. The emancipation of the Catholics was in their eyes an essential and indispensable consequence. As far as Ireland's internal peace was concerned, it was the moral necessity for emancipation that, more than any other reason, weighed with Pitt in bringing about the conditions which alone could make emancipation possible. The development of Irish commerce and industry in the new atmosphere of political freedom and equality, and under the stimulus of free access to the British market, was to follow. Nor is it too fantastic to suggest that, had leisure and means been afforded him, so zealous a disciple of Adam Smith as Pitt might have endeavoured to carry out not only the policy of political union and national free trade preached by his master, but also some practical constructive method of creating in Ireland that true security of tenure and mutual co-operation which that same master praised

so highly in the relations of English landlords and tenants.

But from the first a malign fate seemed destined to delay and even undo the healing and strengthening work of Union. Pitt and Castlereagh were forced to resign office by George III.'s obstinate refusal even to listen to the idea of Catholic emancipation. For nearly thirty years Irish Catholics were deprived of that political equality for the sake of which the Union had been devised. When they did receive emancipation it was only in face of a menacing agitation, whose success was not a promising augury for the future. Worse still in many ways, the Union itself was only half completed. The Viceroyalty and all the rotten administrative apparatus of the old separatist *régime*, which Pitt and Castlereagh meant to wipe out for good and all, were left to cumber the ground in Dublin. The old clique retained their predominance at the "Castle" as advisers of the Administration and, indirectly, of the British Ministry, and as claimants to all offices of profit. True Parliamentary responsibility on the part of the Administration was thus largely circumvented, while the separatism in administration inevitably stopped the growth of any real community of political interest between the Irish members at Westminster and their British colleagues. Lastly, in the terrible stress of the Napoleonic War, there was neither money nor statesmanship available to undertake the task of active economic development or to attempt a reconstruction of the vicious agrarian system.

Yet in spite of all these adverse conditions, in spite of the continuous increase of taxation to meet the ruinous cost of another fifteen years of war, Ireland showed remarkable evidence of economic progress and increase in productive power during the earlier decades of the Union. Increased facility of access to the British market gave a powerful stimulus to Irish agriculture, especially during the period of war prices. Such statistics as are available all indicate a very considerable general increase of wealth and production in the first

forty years of the Union. Irish industries, indeed, suffered from English competition, more especially after 1820, partly owing to the removal of internal duties, but still more owing to the immense increase in English competitive power due to the general introduction of machinery. The Ulster linen industry alone seems to have had the capital and the enterprise necessary to accommodate itself to the new conditions. But agriculture was so much the most important factor in Irish national life that the development of agricultural production alone might have been sufficient to maintain a prosperous and contented people had the internal conditions of the great national industry been sound.

Unfortunately, those conditions could not have been worse. Under the existing system of land tenure almost the whole of the profit was retained by the landlord or by middlemen, to whom the land was sublet, and whether the money was spent in Ireland or in London, little of it went back to the industry in the form of capital improvement. With the terribly low standard of life existing among the labouring population, the increase of wages and employment due to increased production reflected itself not in a growth of well-being, but in a mere multiplication of numbers. Between 1800 and 1845 the population of Ireland increased from somewhere under five millions to over eight millions, the great majority living on the very verge of subsistence, mainly on the produce of a small patch of potatoes. The very increase of the population, by intensifying the demand for land and thus raising rents, tended to reduce the standard of living still further. Even before the Famine more than one Commission had inquired into this disquieting state of affairs. Only a bold constructive policy securing a better distribution of Ireland's growing productive wealth, furnishing new outlets for the employment of the surplus population, and educating the people to a higher standard both of well-being and of efficiency, could have averted a grave crisis.

But the last thing of which the United Kingdom was capable at that moment was a policy of constructive reform. The whole intellectual world in England, and with it in Ireland, was being swept away in the full tide of *laissez faire* enthusiasm. By the new representatives brought into the House of Commons after the Reform Act the crude and shallow generalisations of the fashionable theory were embraced as the doctrines of an inspired religion, and carried out with a fanatical zeal which no argument, no fact, however obvious, no consideration of justice or humanity could moderate. Great Britain, just entering upon the immense industrial expansion built up by centuries of constructive statesmanship, could stand the experiment, though at the cost of a heavy legacy of social and economic problems bequeathed to our day. Upon Ireland, weakened by long exclusion from the United Kingdom, demoralised by internal divisions, on the verge of an economic crisis which inevitably followed upon the increased productive activity stimulated by the Union, the *laissez faire* mania descended like a devastating plague.

At first Ireland was merely left alone to drift towards the almost inevitable crisis of the Potato Famine. It was not till the Famine actually came in 1846 that "Cobdenism" was given its opportunity to prevent every measure of relief which could have mitigated the disaster and repaired its ravages. While vast sums were spent on designedly useless relief works, every practical proposal for building railways or other really productive works, for preventing the exportation of food from Ireland, or for using the Navy to bring corn from oversea, was scouted as contrary to the only true faith. Even the actual supply of food to the starving was only made on condition that they should conform to the orthodox standard of "pauperism" by divesting themselves of their land, so that all chance of future recovery was effectively precluded for them. A quarter of a million persons perished, and a million more fled to America, the vanguard of millions to follow, carry-

ing with them a bitter hatred against the country which they regarded as the cause of all their calamities.

The Famine was followed, not by any remedial legislation calculated to reorganise the tottering framework of agricultural society, but by measures whose one guiding principle seems to have been the scrapping of human machinery. The Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 swept away the old landlords by thousands, including many of those who had stood most helpfully by their tenants in the Famine, and replaced them by speculators whose first business was to evict all "superfluous" tenants. Eviction was still further facilitated by Deasy's Act in 1860. While every shred of customary or legal security of tenure was being torn away from the wretched peasantry, the economic security on which the whole agricultural industry and population of Ireland rested had been destroyed by Free Trade. The consequences of the withdrawal of all protection to Irish agriculture were not, indeed, as immediate or as palpable as those of the disastrous experiments in applying Cobdenite principles to the agrarian problem. Indirectly, it is true, they were not long in making themselves felt. Mr. Gladstone's action between 1853 and 1860 in levelling up all the Irish taxes to the British standard was a natural corollary of the new Free Trade system of finance, and it served still further to draw capital away from Ireland's crippled industry. Meanwhile, during the first twenty-five years which followed the Famine the economic strain was sufficiently adjusted by emigration. The full effect of Free Trade was not disclosed till the end of the 'Seventies, when the opening up of the American Middle West, accentuated by a series of bad harvests, brought Ireland face to face with a new agricultural crisis.

The crisis was not, indeed, confined to Ireland. It was almost equally acute all over Western Europe, and everywhere farmers and manufacturers united to meet the danger arising from American competition, from the demonetisation of silver, and from industrial overproduction, by effectively raising their tariffs. Even

in England agricultural and manufacturing interests joined in the "Fair Trade" movement, and, given normal conditions, would have been supported by a solid vote from Ireland. But Irish conditions were not normal. The agricultural crisis, instead of drawing landlords and tenants together in defence of their common interest, only precipitated a desperate struggle between them. Each side attempted to force the burden of the loss upon the other. The law was on the one side; on the other was the organised determination of the tenants. The memories of ancient confiscation, joined to the dreary tale of constant evictions in the last generation, required little help from eloquent agitators to rouse a desperate resolve to concede no more to a law which seemed to the tenants to contain so little justice. In 1879 Michael Davitt founded the Land League, and for the next few years Ireland was practically in a state of civil war.

At this point the economic and political threads of the story reunite. The opposition to the Union had died down rapidly. But O'Connell revived it in 1830, after his triumph in securing Emancipation, and his influence and eloquence kept the movement fitfully alive for the next decade. The 'Forties witnessed the great outburst of nationalist revolutionary sentiment sweeping through Europe, and Ireland could not escape its contagion. The ancient native sentiment against the Saxon conqueror, the feud of Catholic and Protestant, the more recent grudge of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy against British control and against the Union were blended into a national sentiment in one sense purely artificial, in another made terribly real by the horrors of the Famine. A feeble attempt at a rising marked 1848, the great year of revolution. Among the exiles in America there burnt a fierce desire to renew the attempt and to free Ireland, or, at least, to be revenged on England. That Mid-Victorian England, with its gospel of cosmopolitan brotherhood, with its pedantic economic dogmatism, its bagman's ideals, and impeccable moral virtue, which to us seems only absurd

became in their eyes a malignant and fiendish tyrant against whom every crime was justified. Meanwhile in Parliament a movement in favour of some form of "Home Rule," or local self-government under a federal or quasi-federal scheme, began to be favoured by many Irish members. Isaac Butt was the leader of this moderate party during the 'Seventies, till overthrown by the rise of Parnell. The incarnate embodiment of hatred against England, Parnell resolved to make both the government of Ireland and the work of Parliament impossible, and by sheer dominating force of will almost succeeded. Under his guidance the academic demand for a federal scheme was transformed into a general demand for Home Rule of a wider kind, avowedly as a stepping-stone to national independence. Money for the new campaign was collected in abundance from the Clan-na-Gael, the organisation of the Fenians in America, and, greatest stroke of all, the Land League was, on the advice of Michael Davitt, coupled to the movement to give it driving power and organisation.

From 1880 onwards Parnell was the "uncrowned King of Ireland," now fanning, now damping down the flames of agrarian disorder, and all the time making his power felt more and more, both in Ireland and in the House of Commons, by a vacillating Government. In 1885 his opportunity came. After a vain appeal to the electorate to return him to power with a majority independent of the Irish vote, Mr. Gladstone capitulated to Parnell on Parnell's terms. In April, 1886, the first Home Rule Bill was introduced. But Mr. Gladstone miscalculated the temper of his own supporters. Not even his immense influence could persuade them to acquiesce in such a complete reversal of policy or in the surrender of the government of Ireland to the men who openly declared themselves the enemies of England, and under whose inspiration Ireland had just passed through a veritable orgy of outrage, murder, and intimidation. Led by Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, a solid body of Liberal members helped

to defeat the measure and to insure the return of a Unionist majority at the elections which followed. In 1892 Mr. Gladstone was returned to power again with a majority dependent on Nationalist support, and in 1893 the second Home Rule Bill was carried through the House of Commons. But Parnell was dead, and the Irish members were divided. Liberals themselves were half-hearted. The rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords was endorsed by the country at the General Election of 1895.

Mr. Gladstone's two Home Rule Bills differed in certain important particulars, the most significant of which was the total exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament in the Bill of 1886, and their inclusion in slightly reduced numbers in 1893. But in their essential type they were the same. They handed over the government of Ireland to the Nationalist Party organisation, subject to a number of paper safeguards for the minority which could never have been enforced, to restrictions which, if seriously insisted upon, would have led to endless difficulties, and to financial provisions which would almost inevitably have been repudiated. What would have happened if either Bill had really passed into law it is difficult to conjecture. The most probable answer is that it would have been repealed after a few weeks or months of civil war in Ireland. But even apart from civil war Gladstonian Home Rule was, as a measure of government, wholly unworkable, and, if not repealed, would inevitably have led, through friction, to almost complete separation. Looking back over the years that have intervened, it is obvious that Home Rule either in 1886 or 1893 would have been disastrous to Ireland and a grave source of weakness to the Empire.

And yet it is essential to remember that in Parnell's time the Irish demand for Home Rule represented something very real, and something for which a formidable case could be made, at any rate, from the Nationalist point of view. To that section of the Irish population

for which the Nationalist leaders spoke, the Union during the last generation had meant nothing but disaster upon disaster. That Home Rule might mean injustice to Irish landlords, oppression to Protestants, a weakening of the United Kingdom for defence, were not arguments that could be expected to appeal to them. On the contrary, Home Rule in their eyes stood for the recovery of the lands of their ancestors, the requital of centuries of oppression, possibly an opportunity for revenge upon the nation to which all their sufferings had been due. And, apart from all questions of sentiment, it stood for some hope of prosperity. Things could hardly be worse for them than they had been; under Home Rule they might be better. The Union, so far as they could see, stood for nothing except the enforcement of laws of property which they had ceased to respect. It stood for no beneficent national activity; it offered no policy of redemption. It stood for no economic privilege for Ireland that was not equally given to foreigners, and that would not be equally given to Ireland as a wholly separate and hostile nation. In fact, Union, under the policy which prevailed in this country up till that time, meant none of the things that national union meant elsewhere, or that it is beginning to mean in the United Kingdom to-day. It is necessary to understand this in order to realise both the strength of the Home Rule demand in Ireland twenty-five years ago and its essential unreality to-day. How that change has come about and is destined to come about in increasing measure in the future will be the subject of the succeeding articles.

IV.—THE UNIONIST RECONSTRUCTION.

IN the last article I outlined the salient features of the history of Ireland during the first eighty years or so of the Union. That history falls roughly into two periods. In the first period we see Ireland advancing rapidly in total productive power and population under the stimulus of the Union, but unable, owing to a vicious

social and agrarian system, to utilise that development for the uplifting of the general standard of well-being of the people, and drifting towards a dangerous economic crisis. In the second period we see the outbreak of the crisis followed, not by any attempt at remedial or constructive legislation, but by a deliberate scrapping of the agricultural population of Ireland by the million, in accordance with the crazy fanaticism of the Manchester School, which for a generation or more passed for the height of political wisdom in England. Towards the end of that period we see the demand for political separation, fitful and academic at first, linked up by Parnell with the bitterness of an exasperated peasantry into a tremendous engine of political power. Given the existence of even a nucleus of separatist feeling, the Nationalist movement was after all only the inevitable corollary of a policy which not only aimed at removing all those inducements of mutual economic support by which States are held together, but had actually succeeded in almost destroying the whole framework of society in Ireland. Gladstone's capitulation to Parnell marked the final bankruptcy of *laissez faire* Liberalism in Ireland. Home Rule, as far as Mr. Gladstone and those who followed him were concerned, was not in any honest sense a remedy for Irish ills, but an abject confession of failure.

It was for those who rejected Gladstone's pitiful conclusion to furnish an alternative. Happily, that alternative was not far to seek. If the causes of discontent and separatism in Ireland were social and economic, then it was to social and economic reconstruction, and not to political change, that reformers had to look. That reconstruction had been urged with eloquence and earnestness by statesmen like Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck in their vain endeavour to stem the tide of Cobdenite folly. But it was in vain that they urged land reform and a vigorous policy of development with the help of public funds; in vain that they appealed to

the Irish members to assist them in defeating a fiscal policy, whose consequences upon the farmers of Ireland they only too accurately foretold. It remained for their successors more than a generation later to begin the task of rebuilding the structure of Irish society, of as much of it, at least, as Cobdenism had left in existence. It remains for our day to restore that measure of national protection under which alone Ireland can once more, and on a sounder social groundwork than before, regain the lost millions of her population.

The rejection of the Home Rule Bill saw a Conservative Government returned to power in 1886. In March, 1887, Mr. Arthur Balfour went to Ireland as Chief Secretary, and inaugurated that great work of reconstruction in Ireland, the full significance of which is only now beginning to dawn upon the public mind. The first preliminary to any reconstruction was the re-establishment of law and order. Mr. Balfour beat Parnell and Davitt to a standstill on their own ground, and then set to work upon his great task. The land problem was the kernel of the whole Irish question. To that problem it was becoming more and more evident that there could be only one permanent solution, the conversion of the tenants into freeholders through some system of State-aided purchase. The first step in the direction of that policy was due to John Bright, who had secured the insertion of a clause in the Disestablishment Act of 1869 enabling tenants on Church lands to buy their holdings. A similar clause, which, however, did not produce much result, was inserted, at his instance, in Mr. Gladstone's Land Act of 1870. In 1885, during Lord Salisbury's first Administration, £5,000,000 was advanced to assist Land Purchase by Lord Ashbourne's Act. A much more ambitious but ill-conceived measure with the same object was appended as a sort of rider to the first Home Rule Bill, but subsequently abandoned. Another £5,000,000 was added to the Ashbourne Act in 1888, and in 1891 Mr. Balfour carried a Land Act under which £30,000,000

was made available for Land Purchase. After the interregnum of three years of Liberal Government, during which no remedial measures of any kind were attempted, Mr. Gerald Balfour in 1896 carried an Act extending the scope of the Act of 1891.

But the terms of the Acts of 1891 and 1896, though well framed to protect the interests of the tenants, hardly offered enough inducement to landlords to sell. In 1902 a conference of landlords and tenants, Unionists and Nationalists—itsself a striking testimony to the effect of the policy of land purchase in mitigating political animosities—devised a plan to surmount this difficulty, which was incorporated by Mr. Wyndham in the great Land Act of 1903. Under Mr. Wyndham's Act British credit was pledged to the extent of £100,000,000, an estimate which will have to be considerably exceeded, while £12,000,000 was to be given directly out of public funds in the shape of a bonus to vendors to encourage sales. The success of the Act was amazing. Over 130,000 holdings, aggregating £45,000,000 in value, have already been sold and transferred to their new owners, while agreements have been made to the extent of some £45,000,000 more. Altogether, as a result of the Unionist land policy, over 350,000 holdings covering 10,500,000 acres out of a total agricultural area of 18,750,000 acres, have been acquired, or are in process of being acquired, by the tenants, at a cost of some £115,000,000. Only some 8,000,000 acres, representing, roughly, £87,000,000 in value, still remain to be dealt with. By the wise and courageous use of United Kingdom credit the whole foundation of Irish social and economic life has been rebuilt.

But the Unionist policy did not stop short at land purchase. From the first the policy of securing the land to the tenants was accompanied by a policy whose objects were to teach them to make better use of their land, and to increase the facilities for access to their markets. During his term of office Mr. Balfour opened

up the whole West of Ireland by light railways and roads, and improved the harbours in order to make possible the revival of Ireland's neglected fisheries. Under the Land Act of 1891 the Congested Districts Board was established to deal in a constructive and unconventional spirit with the problem of poverty in the most backward districts. Large areas of land were bought and the holdings redivided, drained, and fenced so as to enable cultivation to be more effectively carried on. Loans were made for the provision of better stock of all kinds, of improved looms for home weaving, of fishing boats or nets. Instruction was given in weaving, lace-making, and other cottage industries, as well as in improved methods of farming. The operations of the Board have since, under the Land Act of 1909, been extended over the whole West of Ireland, a step of doubtful utility, encroaching upon the work both of the Land Commission and of the Department of Agriculture. In 1899 the constructive spirit implied in the methods of the Congested Districts Board was carried out on a much bolder scale, and in a more universally applicable form, by Mr. Gerald Balfour, in the provision of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, by which some £400,000 a year is now spent in teaching improved methods of cultivation, introducing better breeds of stock, and generally increasing the productive efficiency of the people, and thus raising the standard of comfort. Like the Land Act of 1903 the Department of Agriculture was the outcome of an informal and non-party conference, the so-called Recess Committee, convened by Sir Horace Plunkett, afterwards the first head of the Department. It works in co-operation with Advisory Councils, partly nominated, partly elected by the various County and Borough Councils. How profound is the gulf between the spirit now animating the government of Ireland and that of the days of Cobdenism, can be judged by the fact that the attempts of local authorities to establish a system of agricultural education after the Famine

were deliberately suppressed in 1862 in deference to the protests of English Free Traders.

Side by side with the work of regeneration carried out by the Government there has gone on a work of private effort, no less important, and going even deeper into the foundations of national character. The Irish agricultural co-operative movement owes its origin and success to the genius and devotion of Sir Horace Plunkett. Starting single-handed in 1889, and enlisting the services of a handful of patriotic enthusiasts of every shade of political opinion, Sir Horace Plunkett set himself to the task of showing that, whatever political settlement might be arrived at, Irishmen were capable by their own effort of increasing the prosperity of their country. Starting with a single society of fifty members and an annual turnover of £4,500, the work of the I.A.O.S., or Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, has grown till it now includes some 900 societies, with 100,000 members and a turnover of £2,500,000. These societies include dairy societies, agricultural societies, flax societies, poultry societies, societies for bacon curing, bee-keeping, and home industries in general, and last, but not least, mutual credit societies. Both in bringing men of different politics and different religion together, and in strengthening the spirit of enterprise and self-reliance, the Irish co-operative movement is doing an immense work in laying the foundations of a real national life and of a real Irish patriotism in Ireland.

There is yet another factor in the economic regeneration of Ireland which deserves attention. Ever since 1900 the great Irish industry of raising young "store" cattle, to be subsequently fattened and finished for the market in England, has enjoyed absolute protection against the whole outside world. The regulations enforcing the slaughter of all other oversea live stock within twenty-four hours of landing was originally no doubt a purely prophylactic measure to prevent the spread of disease among cattle. But its protective effect

has been as indisputable as it has been profitable to Ireland, and affords at any rate a practical instance of what a rational fiscal policy may do for Ireland in the future.

The long period of Unionist administration was marked by only one Irish measure of a political character, Mr. Gerald Balfour's Local Government Act of 1898, by which the English system of county and rural district government was introduced into Ireland. The Act was a significant proof of the genuineness of the Unionist declaration that Ireland should receive every liberty and every privilege that might be enjoyed by any other portion of the United Kingdom. Of the real effects of the Act it is yet too early to speak. The administration of the County Councils has had testimonials from Irish Secretaries and from the Irish Local Government Board as to its general economy and efficiency. On the other hand, charges of petty corruption and favouritism are freely made against them, and there certainly can be no doubt that they have made little or no attempt at political impartiality. The most reasonable view to take is, perhaps, to attribute their defects to the general unhealthy political atmosphere still prevailing in Ireland, and to trust that, pending the dissipation of that atmosphere, they may prove at any rate of some use in furnishing an education in the elements of administration and finance.

Meanwhile, the success of the non-political conference which led to Mr. Wyndham's Land Act gave rise in the course of the following months to the notion, whose chief exponent was Lord Dunraven, that some sort of compromise between Home Rule and Unionism might be possible on the lines of a special measure of local government, or "devolution," for Ireland under a partially elected, partially nominated Council. The idea was known to be warmly favoured by Sir A. (now Lord) MacDonnell, the Permanent Under-Secretary, and Mr. Wyndham himself was credited with being not altogether unsympathetic. The Nationalists showed themselves profoundly indifferent to the proposal. But

a storm of protest at once rose among Unionists, and was not quieted for some time, though the succession of Mr. Walter Long to the Chief Secretaryship in March, 1905, gave emphasis to the declaration of the Government that it had not the slightest intention of even considering the question. The proposal was taken up by Mr. Birrell, after the return of the Liberals to power, in the Irish Council Bill of 1907. Under this measure an Irish Council of 82 elected and 25 nominated members was to control local government in Ireland on a fixed allowance of £4,000,000 a year. Mr. Redmond began by blessing the Bill, but hurriedly changed his attitude when it became clear that the mass of his supporters in Ireland were opposed to its acceptance. The fact is that the Bill had no merits which could really commend it to anyone. As a measure of local government it was unnecessary and clumsy. Nationalists might have accepted then, as they would to-day, any measure, however unworkable, that gave reasonable promise of being an effective stepping-stone to real separation. But Mr. Birrell's Bill was not sufficiently promising in this respect to conceal its other demerits. The weight of the Roman Catholic Church, too, was generally supposed to have been thrown into the scale against a proposal which proposed to transfer the control of education to a locally elected body. For Unionists the lesson from the fate of "Devolution" is clear. If changes in local government are to be introduced, they must be changes demanded by local government considerations and applicable to the United Kingdom as a whole. Nothing can be gained by attempting to conciliate Nationalism by schemes which will neither satisfy the Nationalist demand nor anyone else's practical needs. Above all, they must hold fast to the essential truth that the cure of Irish problems must be sought, not in Constitutional tinkering, but in social and economic reconstruction.

To the task of economic reconstruction in Ireland the Liberal Government has only made one specific contri-

bution, by no means a negligible one, in the provision of something like £9,000,000, partly on loan, but largely as a free grant, towards the rehousing of the labouring population in town and country, as a result of which the bulk of the farm labourers to-day are as well housed in Ireland as in England, but at half or less than half the rent. But the general social policy of the Government, more particularly the grant of Old Age Pensions, has not been without producing marked effects on Irish life. Not only is the individual relief afforded by Old Age Pensions much greater in a country where the excessive emigration of younger men has left a disproportionately heavy burden of old age for the remaining workers to support. But where money wages are so low, and general poverty still so widespread, the irrigation of the countryside with a widely diffused spray of ready money, to the tune of £2,800,000 a year, has a marked national effect in stimulating enterprise, and in facilitating the local accumulation of the capital so urgently needed for the purposes of local credit.

In other respects, however, it is to be regretted that the policy of economic reconstruction has received a certain set-back under the present Government, due to their excessive anxiety to please their Nationalist allies. The Nationalist politicians have, ever since Parnell's day, clearly realised the truth of Finton Lalor's analysis of the position a generation before Parnell, that the interest of the peasantry in Home Rule was never "native or spontaneous, but forced and factitious," and that it could only be kept alive by being linked "like a railway carriage to an engine" to some grievance possessing the intrinsic strength which Home Rule lacks. As far as they have dared they have consequently always endeavoured to hamper the work of economic and social reconstruction. Their denunciations of Mr. Wyndham's Land Act were fruitless in face of the immense popularity of the measure. But when the very success of the Act, coupled with the heavy fall in Government stock, threatened a financial deadlock,

and necessitated some amending measure, the Nationalists brought pressure to bear on the Government, and secured the passage in 1909 of a new Land Act to meet their views. By making the terms of purchase less favourable both to tenants and to landlords, the Act of 1909 has put a very effective stop to Land Purchase in the future, while the introduction of provisions for compulsory purchase is calculated to dissipate that atmosphere of mutual goodwill and concession which the Wyndham Act has so successfully created, and which is so fatal to the Nationalist cause. Towards the great co-operative movement the attitude of official Nationalism has been equally grudging, an attitude influenced no doubt, in part, by the fact that so large a proportion of the leading local politicians are village shopkeepers or moneylenders, who bitterly resent the co-operative movement as an invasion of their monopoly. The recent action of Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. Dillon in preventing the Development Commissioners from giving to the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society its share of the grant which is being given to offshoots of the same society in England and Scotland, is not likely to injure seriously the cause of co-operation in Ireland. But it throws an interesting light upon Nationalist politicians and their Liberal henchmen. In a sense the Nationalists are perfectly right. Prosperity in Ireland is fatal to their cause. But it is so only because that cause is "forced and factitious," a spurious counterfeit and not a true national movement.

Meanwhile, in spite of Nationalist opposition and Liberal truckling, the great work of reconstruction set on foot by Unionist statesmanship has gone steadily forward, and is ever gaining impetus. Ireland has long ago reached the turning point, and is not only more prosperous than ever before in her history, but is moving vigorously forward to greater prosperity. Since 1893, the year of the second Home Rule Bill, the money deposited in Irish Post Office and Trustee Savings Banks has increased from under £6,000,000 to nearly

£15,000,000, and in Joint Stock Banks, from under £35,000,000 to £56,000,000. Even between 1904 and 1910 the total import and export trade of Ireland has risen from £103,790,000 to £130,888,000, an increase of well over 25 per cent. The whole outlook of the Irish people is being transformed. There is no longer a present grievance wherewith to keep alive continually the legend of past wrongs. Its place has been taken by a present prosperity, giving continuous hope of greater prosperity to come. And with that new outlook is coming a gradual realisation, not only that the remedy of grievances, and the prosperity it has brought, have come under the Union, but that the Union is indispensable to the continuance and expansion of that prosperity. More gradually still will come the realisation that the Union is not only compatible with the growth of a true national life in Ireland, but is the indispensable condition of that growth.

V.—UNIONISM AND TARIFF REFORM.

THE immense achievement of the Unionist policy of social reconstruction and economic regeneration in Ireland is only now beginning to be realised in its true proportions. The Home Rule Bill of 1912 will, indeed, be in all essentials the same Bill as its predecessors. But the Ireland to which it is intended to apply is a wholly different country, a country on a different level of prosperity, on a different agrarian basis, and with a new outlook upon the world and upon its place in that world. The Nationalist Party, indeed, survives, like the Bourbons, "learning nothing and forgetting nothing," and the grip of its various subordinate and affiliated organisations on the countryside is, to all outward appearance, as strong as ever. But it survives as a political machine, not as a moral force. The moral forces in Ireland are breaking out in all sorts of directions, but they do not choose the Nationalist Party as the channel of their expression. Has the Unionist

Party, then, completed its work in Ireland? Has it, in fact, simply equipped Ireland to embark upon that enterprise of Home Rule, for which, it is now almost universally admitted, she was unfit twenty years ago? On the contrary, I maintain, not only that Home Rule would undo most of the good work already done, but that the task of Unionism itself, is, in a sense, only beginning.

After all, the prosperity of Ireland to-day is only relative. In its general development, in its standard of living, in the economic efficiency of its people, Ireland still lags a long way behind the rest of the United Kingdom. What Ireland may yet be capable of in output of productive energy and in the support of a prosperous, active, and self-confident people, has yet to be tried. But, assuredly, if the Ireland of seventy years ago could, from that scanty margin of its productive wealth which then trickled through to the wretched peasantry, sustain a population of eight millions, it is absurd to suppose that on the sounder social basis of to-day Ireland should be incapable of supporting more than half that population in decent comfort. To restore to Ireland the lost millions of her population, but to restore them at a level of true well-being such as Ireland has never known, to make Ireland a source of strength, and not of weakness, to the United Kingdom and to the Empire, strength in commerce, strength in men, strength in loyalty—there is a worthy aim for Unionism to set before itself. Nor is there anything impossible or even extravagant in that aim. With the final abandonment of the Cobdenite folly which has driven four millions of Irish people from their homes, we shall once more have in our control that instrument of nation-building power by which those millions can be restored. And this time we shall be building not upon the unsound foundations which separatism bequeathed to the Union of 1801, but on a sound foundation of our own laying, capable of carry-

ing a stable and even splendid superstructure of national life.

It is a curious feature that amid all the discussion of Tariff Reform as a policy of Imperial development and Imperial Union, so little has been said of it as a policy of United Kingdom development and of union between the component parts of that kingdom. Yet every argument for inter-Imperial Preference as an instrument for developing the population and wealth of the Dominions and drawing them closer to the Mother Country, is applicable with infinitely greater force to the case of Ireland and Great Britain. Free Trade has proved a policy of economic and political disintegration in the United Kingdom, far more even than in the Empire. Tariff Reform can prove a far greater power to regenerate Ireland and to consolidate the United Kingdom than even the most enthusiastic Tariff Reformer has ventured to affirm.

To give adequate benefit to Ireland the Unionist tariff of the near future must be one which benefits agriculture. To what extent can such a tariff benefit agriculture, and more particularly Irish agriculture? The essential principles on which the agricultural schedules of the tariff must be based are: firstly, preference to the products of the Empire over those of foreign countries; secondly, free entry from the Empire of those foodstuffs which form the staple food of the working classes, and which cannot be grown in sufficient quantity in the United Kingdom without a serious increase in price; thirdly, protection to the United Kingdom against the rest of the Empire, as well as against foreign countries, in respect of those agricultural products which are either luxuries, or can be produced in the United Kingdom in sufficient quantity without appreciable increase in price, especially where those products employ much labour, and facilitate the development of rural industries. It follows, upon these principles, that the tariff will not include a duty against Empire-grown wheat, and very possibly may not

include any against Empire-grown beef, mutton, or bacon. It is a common platform point among Free Traders to assume that if there is no Protection on wheat or beef there can be no help to agriculture. As a matter of fact British agriculture is not vitally interested in the protection of either of these products. A shilling duty on Colonial wheat, or a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty on Colonial beef and mutton, would not really help the cultivation of wheat, or affect the competition between home-grown and imported meat, which cater for very different markets. Ireland, which is less of a wheat-growing country than England, and which devotes itself to rearing "store" cattle rather than finishing beef for the market, would be still less affected.

On the other hand, a duty on flour would help the milling industry in Ireland as in England, and the consequent cheap supply of offals would help in the raising of every kind of livestock. Free Colonial wheat does not necessarily imply free Colonial oats or barley, and in both these crops Ireland is capable of a great increase of production. As regards barley more particularly, there is no reason why the duty should not be a really substantial one, the brewers being compensated for any rise in price by a reduction of existing taxation. In dairy produce, in poultry and eggs, in potatoes and many kinds of vegetables and fruit, there is so abundant a margin for increased production that reasonable protection can well be afforded without involving any risk of dearness.

The importation of the United Kingdom in barley, oats, dairy products, poultry, eggs, and potatoes amounts to something like £50,000,000 a year. If, with the help of a national tariff, Ireland were enabled to secure even a fifth part of this trade, it would mean an immense addition to the prosperity of the country.

There are two agricultural industries which are non-existent under Free Trade in the United Kingdom, but which flourish on the Continent and play an immensely

important part in the whole economy of rural life. These are sugar and tobacco. Both are of especial value to the small freeholder. A sugar factory in a rural district means to the small holder a constant steady market with the very minimum of trouble in marketing. All he has to attend to is the growing of a good beet with a high percentage of sugar, and the factory does the rest, including the return to him of abundant cattle feed in the crushed slices from which the sugar has been extracted. For his sons and daughters the factory provides opportunities for subsidiary earnings without wholly withdrawing them from the farm when extra labour is required. Much the same applies to tobacco, an intensive crop, employing plenty of labour both during the period of cultivation and upon the work of curing afterwards. For both these industries there is a large scope in Ireland. Tobacco was once grown in Ireland in large quantities, and the patriotic efforts of Sir Nugent Everard have proved that not only pipe tobacco, but also cigarette tobacco of excellent quality, and even cigars, can be grown on Irish soil. With an Excise duty reduced to a shilling a pound, with Empire grown tobacco charged two shillings and foreign tobacco at the present rate of nearly four shillings, there would be room both for a great expansion of a profitable industry in England and Ireland, and for a substantial reduction of cost to the consumer. Assuming that Ireland secured only £3,000,000 of the £24,000,000 of sugar at present imported from abroad, and £1,000,000 out of the £3,500,000 of unmanufactured tobacco, even that would represent a by no means contemptible addition to agricultural stability and rural employment.

But the benefits of Tariff Reform to Ireland need not by any means be confined to agriculture. Ireland's greatest industry, the linen industry of Belfast, is, indeed, in a very strong position already both in the home and in the Colonial market. Yet even the linen industry could add appreciably to its output if helped

by a tariff in the home market, and by a further extension of preference in the Empire. But linen is by no means the only Irish industry. Few things are more interesting or more significant than the indications of a real industrial revival which are showing themselves in various directions in Ireland. The exports from Ireland of goods of Irish manufacture under the headings of apparel, woollen goods, carpets, silver ware, poplin, and furniture rose from £600,000 in 1905 to nearly £1,000,000 in 1909, woollen goods accounting for over half the total. With a margin of something like £10,000,000 a year of foreign woollen goods imported into the United Kingdom, Tariff Reform ought to give a really useful opportunity to Irish as well as to British manufacturers to increase their output. An industry in which Ireland has a really great opportunity under Tariff Reform is the silk industry. That industry has been largely wiped out in the United Kingdom by Free Trade, and when it revives—and there is no reason why it should not have a substantial tariff to help it—Ireland with its cheaper labour and the textile skill already existing in its linen industry will have every opportunity to capture a substantial share of the £13,000,000 or more at present imported from foreign countries.

Apart from its protective and stimulating effect, Tariff Reform in its purely fiscal aspect is bound to be of immense help to Ireland. The one clear fact emerging from the somewhat topsy-turvy logic of the Report of the Irish Financial Relations Committee of 1894, was that the enormously heavy indirect taxation on tea, tobacco, and spirits imposed by our present fiscal system weighs unfairly upon the poorest classes, and, consequently, upon Ireland as a whole, owing to the high proportion of poor persons in its population. The unfairness is still further accentuated by the fact that the Irish poor are very heavy consumers of tea and tobacco relatively to their means. A redistribution of taxation by which the tea and tobacco duties would

be drastically lowered and duties placed upon foreign manufactures would undoubtedly not only relieve the poorer classes all over the United Kingdom, but would benefit Ireland more particularly.

The excess of national expenditure in Ireland over revenue would, for the time being, be still further increased by the readjustment of our fiscal system. But the increase will only hasten forward the time when Ireland will have been lifted up to the position of a really effective contributor to the national wealth and the national revenue. The Unionist policy in Ireland is emphatically not a policy of doles, intended to keep Ireland in a condition of permanent dependence on the British Treasury. It is a policy of capital expenditure, like the draining of water-logged land or the rebuilding of derelict farm dwellings, essential to making Ireland a going concern, a real partner in the United Kingdom. Once that policy is in full operation it will begin to bear fruit in a rapidly-increasing revenue, derived not from the over-taxation of the poor, but from the growing consumption of a prosperous people—a revenue sufficient to provide not only for Irish expenditure, but for a substantial contribution to Imperial expenditure.

And not only the common revenue, but British trade also will be a gainer by the growth of Irish prosperity. Even under present conditions Ireland buys some £50,000,000 of British goods a year. In other words, she provides British trade with a market larger than any other single market in the world, larger than India with its 300,000,000 people, or than Germany with its 65,000,000. But under a national policy that market would, within a generation, be doubled or more than doubled. Unionism means prosperity to Great Britain as well as to Ireland, though to Ireland in relatively greater measure. Separatism, as I hope to show later, means economic loss to Great Britain, but far heavier loss to Ireland.

VI.—UNIONISM AND THE IRISH SEA.

IRISH poverty and Irish political separatism, as I have pointed out in the preceding articles, have, in no small degree, been the product of the policy of economic weakness and disunion known as Free Trade. The policy of economic union and development, to which the Unionist Party stands committed, will not only give an immense stimulus to the growth of population and prosperity in Ireland, but will do much to create that sense of mutual benefit which has been so lacking in the past, and to promote a closer and more active intercourse between Ireland and the main island.

But the wise use of the national customs tariff is by no means the only instrument of a policy which aims at promoting national union through the play of economic forces. The main object of a tariff as an instrument of national policy is to induce the citizens of the State to trade with each other rather than with foreigners. But in the attainment of this object an essential complement to the tariff is a well-developed system of internal communications which will facilitate internal intercourse. To surmount or remove natural internal barriers by opening up the arteries of internal communication is as important a part of national policy as to set up artificial barriers against the dissipation of economic forces into non-national channels. The development of internal communications has always been the first concern of all statesmen who have had to face the task of giving cohesion and strength to weak and imperfectly cemented political unions. Washington's chief anxiety after the recognition of American Independence was to induce the States to co-operate in the creation of a system of internal river and canal navigation in order to promote the habit of mutual trade and to create the conditions of a real union. The Prussian State railways in Bismarck's hands were the essential complement of the Zollverein in the creation of German unity. The founders of Canadian unity realised from the first that as a geographical unit

Canada was non-existent, and still had to be made. The Intercolonial Railway, linking the Maritime Provinces with Quebec and Ontario, and the Canadian Pacific, bridging two thousand miles and more of wilderness between Ontario and British Columbia, were the instruments by which the Dominion was first given geographical cohesion, while ever since the policy of Canadian statesmen has been by the construction of new lines to the north of the Canadian Pacific to give Canada real depth as well as extension.

The internal continuity of the United Kingdom is broken by one serious natural obstacle: the Irish Sea. Sea carriage is undoubtedly cheap between English ports and Irish ports. The passenger service provided by half-a-dozen different routes is both speedy and well arranged. For all that, the impossibility of sending goods direct from inland points in one island to inland points in the other, without the delay and expense of two transshipments, constitutes a serious handicap to trade, while the discomfort to passengers, slight though it may seem, of the broken journey is enough to interpose a serious barrier to intercourse of every kind. The secret of American industrial activity is the sleeping-car, which carries the American business man hundreds of miles to inspect promising enterprises or settle important negotiations with the minimum of discomfort or loss of time. The night express to Scotland plays a correspondingly important part in the business, politics, and pleasure of Great Britain. But Ireland remains apart; to go to Ireland is a journey. The night trip, the inevitable resource of the busy, is a gloomy vista of fitful snatches of sleep broken by a cold and comfortless migration from quay to deck, sufficient of itself to decide the fate of the indifferent sailor.

It has long been perfectly possible to overcome the natural obstacle to trade and travel presented by the Irish Sea by the use of a device which is almost universal under similar conditions elsewhere. I refer, of course, to train-ferries, *i.e.*; steamers specially built to carry

the trains bodily, and so save passengers the discomfort of changing their compartment, and goods the expense of two handlings. In Denmark a whole system of train-ferries, the oldest dating back some thirty years, has not only made that sea-divided little kingdom one, but has given its island capital direct railway communication with both Sweden and Germany. Another line, with a seventeen-knot service, connects Tralleborg, in Sweden, with Sassnitz, on the German side of the Baltic, a distance of sixty-five miles, or identically the same as the distance from Holyhead to Dublin. The traveller can take the sleeping-car from Berlin to Copenhagen or to Stockholm, and, if he is sufficiently ignorant of geography, may leave it at his destination without ever realising that he has crossed some twenty-five or sixty-five miles of sea, as the case may be. In the United States there are a number of train-ferries running across bays and arms of the sea, such as Chesapeake Bay, thirty-six miles across. But the region of the Great Lakes is where the Americans have carried the train-ferry system to its fullest development. Lake Michigan is 345 miles long by 84 wide, fairly comparable in size to the Irish Sea. It is traversed by nine separate train-ferry lines varying from 60 to 240 miles in length.

Of the commercial success of these train-ferries there can be no doubt. Their very multiplication speaks for itself. The oldest, the ferry across the Great Belt, between the Danish islands of Funen and Zealand, started in 1883 with a passenger traffic of 120,000 and a goods traffic of 70,000 tons. The figures for 1903 were 690,000 passengers and 350,000 tons of goods. The old steamship route from Tralleborg to Sassnitz carried during the last six months of 1908 9,640 passengers and 2,600 tons of goods. The train-ferry was opened in June, 1909. In the last six months of that year the traffic was 34,248 passengers, or an increase of 255 per cent., and 35,100 tons of goods, or an increase of 1,250 per cent. The train-ferries of the Ann Arbor Railroad, on Lake Michigan, carried 300,000 tons of goods in

1898 and 470,000 in 1903. The Père Marquette Company's ferries carried 500,000 tons in 1900 and 1,300,000 tons in 1904. These are amazing figures, both as regards the rate of increase and the immense volume of traffic dealt with.

Except want of imagination, there is no conceivable reason why the Irish Sea should not long ago have been traversed by at least as many train-ferry lines as Lake Michigan. Storm and fog are both more serious on the great fresh-water sea, where ice also often presents serious problems to navigation. The rise and fall of the tide is no obstacle, as is shown by the American sea lines. Nor can it be said that we do not know how to construct suitable vessels for this kind of traffic, seeing that both the Tralleborg-Sassnitz line and the Lake Baikal ferry in Siberia have had their vessels built in this country. There is, in fact, only one technical difficulty—namely, the difference in gauge between English and Irish railways. The simplest and most effective way of dealing with this would be to reduce the Irish gauge throughout to the British standard. Meanwhile there are several devices by which it would be possible to lift the trucks from their English bogies and substitute Irish bogies, and vice versâ, without involving more than a very few minutes' delay.

The effect upon Irish conditions would be almost incalculable. The possibility of loading up a complete train with poultry or dairy produce at Athlone or Mullingar, and running it straight through to Birmingham or Leicester, would give an immense stimulus to Irish farmers, enabling them to compete on quite different terms with their Danish rivals, while it would at the same time tend to keep down the cost to the consumer. The fisheries on the West Coast of Ireland, too, would gain enormously by being able to ship straight through to London in a few hours. Irish inland industries, on the other hand, would, for the first time, be able to secure a reasonably cheap supply of coal direct from the pit's mouth in Lanarkshire or Wales. With

travelling made easy, not only would the tourist and sporting traffic increase enormously, but English business men would begin to run over to inspect and take up Irish enterprises. That dense veil of the unknown which to-day hides Ireland from the British business world would be dissipated, and Ireland's natural resources would get a fairer opportunity of access to the capital which is essential to their development. With business intercourse would come closer political intercourse, and the last, I fancy, would soon be heard of Colonel Seely's contention at Newry last December that the Irish Sea makes political union between the British and Irish democracies impossible.

But the importance to Ireland of the development of a system of train-ferries is not confined to the increase in trade and intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland. By reducing the Irish Sea to its proper position as a mere internal ditch, well bridged in every direction, it will for the first time enable the true West Coast of the United Kingdom to be put to its proper use, as the starting point of all the fast mail and passenger services across the Atlantic. The West Coast of Ireland is not only over 300 miles nearer to the other side of the Atlantic, but its fine harbours enjoy much greater immunity from fog, and are more easily entered than those of our narrow English estuaries. With a train-ferry across St. George's Channel and a 25-knot service on the Atlantic it will be possible to do the journey from London to Halifax inside four days. With such a scheme Ireland would become, what her geographical position entitles her to be, the eastern bridge-head of the North Atlantic. No longer a mere derelict by the wayside, waiting idle and hungry, while the great streams of commerce flow past her shores to North and South, she would triumphantly bestride the main highway of the world's traffic. No longer an economic stepchild, a "least-favoured" Colony in matters of trade, she would become an integral connecting link in the chain of Empire.

There are two claimants for the position of Ireland's chief Transatlantic harbour, Galway and Blacksod Bay. Galway is already on a main line of railway, while the railway from Collooney to Blacksod Bay, a matter of fifty miles or so, has yet to be built. It can, moreover, boast an ancient history as a great seaport, one of the busiest in the British Isles in the seventeenth century. Blacksod Bay, on the other hand, is undoubtedly 70 miles nearer to Halifax, and is a much more effectively sheltered harbour, with an absolutely clear run across the Atlantic, once the steamer passes the magnificent cliffs of Achill Head which guard its entrance. Which-ever harbour is selected, it would be well if, in addition to its purely commercial uses, it were developed as a naval base for the North Atlantic. The advantages of such a base for the protection of our food supplies in time of war, and as a harbour of refuge for fast steamers carrying wheat, are obvious. And if the Imperial expenditure on naval works should be of some incidental benefit to Ireland, and served to redress the inequality in the distribution of such expenditure, of which Ireland undoubtedly has had reason to complain in the past, no Unionist should be otherwise than satisfied.

There is no task to which a Unionist Government could devote itself with a greater certainty not only of vastly increasing the whole productive efficiency of the United Kingdom, and of Ireland in particular, but also of drawing the component parts both of the United Kingdom and of the Empire closer together, than that of abolishing the Irish Sea, and making the West Coast of Ireland the true West Coast of the United Kingdom for the purposes of Transatlantic traffic. So practicable is this development in itself, and so certain to be rewarded by success, that the subsidies required to give it a start will not really be very large. But whatever they may be, they will be well worth spending. Every pound spent in that way will do more for Ireland and for the Union than ten spent in any other direction.

VII.—FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF UNIONIST POLICY.

IN the last two articles I have given expression to the conviction that the main work of Unionism in Ireland, after the final defeat of Home Rule, is to be sought in two directions: the adjustment of the tariff of the United Kingdom with a special view to Irish needs, and the abolition of the Irish Sea as a barrier to trade and intercourse. But there is undoubtedly still much specific work to be done in Ireland itself in order to put it into a position to make the fullest and best use of the opportunities which the general economic policy of Unionism will create. Much as has been done already in that direction, the ill-effects of separatism in the remoter past, and of Cobdenism under the Union, are still far from being obliterated. There is still a large task before the State in Ireland—and an even larger task before patriotic Irishmen in laying that foundation of character for which the State can do little more than furnish opportunities for development.

The first business of a Unionist Government will undoubtedly be to set land purchase in working order again. The Wyndham Act should be restored in its essentials, and the necessary money found to complete the whole task. The value of the lands still unapplied for amounts, at an extreme outside figure, to nearly £87,000,000. What the purchase of this would involve in the way of actual cost to the Government it is not easy to say under present conditions. But it is essential to remember that the chief difficulty in the way of the carrying on of an otherwise immensely successful scheme has been the continued fall in Government Stock. As long as the vendors were paid in cash this meant an ever-increasing loss to the State. Under the Birrell Act, by which vendors are compelled to take Three per Cent. Stock at its nominal value, there is no loss, but also no land purchase. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, in the absence of serious international complications, the return of a Unionist Government will be marked by a sufficient appreciation of Government

securities to enable land purchase to be resumed effectively without too great a charge upon the general taxpayer.

In this connection it is possible that the immense extension of scope recently given to the operations of the Congested Districts Board will have to be carefully reviewed. The Board has done admirable work in the past, more particularly when it was small and working on unconventional lines to deal with exceptional conditions. But, as now enlarged, it overlaps seriously both the work of the Land Commission and that of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. As regards the former, it can hardly be desirable to have two rival systems of land purchase going on at the same time. As regards the latter, it is very doubtful whether it can be beneficial to extend the operations of the Board, which have shown signs of a tendency to degenerate into a system of "spoon-feeding," especially when carried out through parish committees, at the expense of the more educational and scientific methods of the Department.

In any case, much remains to be done in developing and extending the work of the Department in many directions. The policy of hostility to the co-operative movement will have to be replaced by a policy of sympathy and encouragement, free at the same time from any attempt to trammel the movement with officialdom or to deprive it in any way of that essential feature of private personal initiative which gives it its greatest value. There is still room for considerable development of Irish fisheries, especially if the work of the Department is once facilitated by through railway connection with the English market. The problem of utilising the vast reserves of potential fuel for industrial purposes contained in Ireland's peat bogs is one deserving the closest attention of the Government, and generous support should be extended to all genuine attempts to solve it. Hitherto few of the experiments made have been commercially successful. But there is no ground for believing that the difficulties are insuper-

able if only sufficient inducement is given to science and to industrial enterprise to take the matter in hand.

Closely connected with the problem of utilising the peat supply, which the Government can only encourage, are two tasks which it will have to take in hand more directly—namely, drainage and afforestation. Ireland undoubtedly suffers seriously from the fact that large areas of its surface are waterlogged. These areas are not only useless in themselves, but their presence tends to keep down the surrounding temperature and to add to the already excessive humidity caused by the sea. A systematic policy of arterial and local drainage ought not only to add directly to the acreage of land available, but would quite appreciably improve the general agricultural conditions of the country by raising the temperature and diminishing the moisture of the climate. Afforestation, on the other hand, would help in the permanent reclamation of many of the bog lands and unprofitable mountain sides, when they have been drained or cleared of peat, and would provide the foundation of a valuable national industry.

Further, to enable Ireland to take full advantage of the opportunities which will be afforded by the establishment of a national tariff for the protection of the industries of the United Kingdom, it will be necessary to exercise a wise generosity in granting temporary bounties to any such industries as may have an opportunity of really developing in Ireland if once established on a remunerative footing. The silk industry, for instance, to which I have already referred, is one example which Irish enterprise, coupled with a little judicious State encouragement, might well determine to become almost as predominantly an Irish industry as linen already is. The establishment of a special Irish Industrial Development Fund, derived partly from voluntary contributions and partly from the proceeds of all economies that may be effected in the cost of the Irish Constabulary, or of other branches of the administration, would both avoid the idea that Great Britain was to be specially taxed to promote Irish competition, and

at the same time help to create a real public opinion in Ireland itself in favour of economy as well as of law and order. Agriculture, too, might be greatly assisted by a bold extension and development of the principle of the Parcels Post to agricultural produce.

In the matter of education the recent establishment of the Irish National University by the present Government has at any rate removed the last trace of any grievance that could be alleged against the educational system in Ireland on religious grounds. How far the new University will really make for the highest educational efficiency has still to be seen. Primary and secondary education are hampered by the religious difficulty, by local poverty, and, as regards secondary education at any rate, by the vicious system of cram examinations and payments by results which prevails. A better system of payments, coupled with the increase of technical and practical teaching, would do much to help matters in this last respect, and to check the creation of a type of Irish *baboo*, who, whether an ardent Nationalist, or a contemptuous critic of his fellow-countrymen, is of little practical use to Ireland. Both the religious difficulty and local poverty prevent the extension, for the present at any rate, of the English system of rate aid with its corollary of local popular control. But it is curious to think, in view of the outcry against Mr. Balfour's Education Act in England, that the very provisions which were denounced so bitterly here as enforcing the payment of rates without popular control, are impossible in Ireland, because neither Roman Catholic priests nor Presbyterian ministers would acquiesce in the popular control which they would involve. Pending a solution of the difficulty, some increase of the State contribution both for better educational equipment and for teachers' salaries will probably be necessary. Of other social reforms, the only one that is at all urgent, and in Ireland possibly even more than in England, is the reform of the Poor Law.

So much for the economic and social aspects of the work still before the Unionist Party in Ireland. That is the main task before us, for it is by social and economic remedies, and not by constitution-mongering, that we can cure the social and economic evils which have created Irish discontent in the past. Nevertheless even in the political field Unionists have asserted throughout a clear and consistent policy, which still lacks completion in certain respects, and may even warrant further developments. That principle is to deny to Ireland no political right or privilege which is granted in England, to acknowledge her status in the Union as that of the fullest equality with every other part of the Union. From the standpoint of that principle the maintenance of the Lord Lieutenant and his Court is entirely indefensible. The Viceroyalty is a mere survival of the old dependent status of Ireland, and its abolition was always intended by Pitt and Castlereagh, but, like Catholic Emancipation, not carried out by men who were too small to realise the conception of national Union. With the disappearance of the Viceroy the ground would be cleared for a real Royal residence in Dublin, and for the regular holding of real Courts, a change which would be universally popular.

The position of Ireland could then in most respects be assimilated to that of Scotland. The multiplicity of overlapping boards—by no means so serious a matter in reality as the ingenious arithmetic of Nationalist critics would make us believe—could be simplified and co-ordinated. The Scottish procedure with regard to Private Bill legislation might also be adopted for Ireland, as, indeed, was proposed in a Bill introduced by Mr. Balfour in 1892, and purely local Bills dealt with by a special local tribunal. It is possible, indeed, that the growing dimensions of local government work and the need for a larger area of local government to co-ordinate the work of county and borough councils in respect of higher and technical education, the institutional treatment of

consumptives, feeble-minded, or insane, housing, the making of roads, the distribution of electric power, the working of trams and light railways, and to secure some measure of equalisation of rates for such purposes, may lead to the grouping of adjoining county councils with the borough councils in their area under some form of provincial councils. If such a policy for the higher organisation of local government commended itself to Parliament on its intrinsic merits, it would naturally be extended to Ireland as well, and the old historic provinces of Ireland might revive once more as real centres of local activity. But that any still larger unit of government should ever be created in the United Kingdom, that there is room for anything in the nature of a Federal Constitution, based on a fourfold division into England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, does not appear to me to be either necessary or desirable, for reasons which will be given in a later article.

Meanwhile, there is one last remnant of inequality marking Ireland off from the rest of the United Kingdom as a country of doubtful loyalty or on an inferior plane of citizenship. That is the refusal to extend the organisation of the Territorial Army to Ireland, a refusal all the more marked and all the more regrettable since the abolition of the old Militia. Such a refusal is a wholly unnecessary slur upon those Irishmen who wish to join the force and emphasise their loyalty and patriotism. Whether the force would meet with universal success is, of course, another question. But the idea that the Nationalists would secretly gain control of it in order to use it on some future occasion as an instrument of armed revolution—as undoubtedly the Ulster Volunteers did in 1782—involves, I think, an entire misconception of the situation in Ireland to-day. The force may be boycotted in certain districts, and, if so, will simply not come into existence in those districts. But where the young men join it they will join it in exactly the same spirit in which they joined the old Militia, or in which they enlist in the Army or the Constabulary to-day, and show exactly the same

loyalty and the same sense of duty. They may vote Nationalist when they go to the polling booth. But they will do their duty when they wear the King's uniform.

To sum up. Unionism has achieved a great constructive work in Ireland during the last generation. It has a still greater task before it in building upon the foundation now laid a future of progress and prosperity undreamt of hitherto. The final triumph of that task will be the creation of a true national life in Ireland—not an exclusive sectional nationalism living on the distorted memories of an unhappy past and preaching a gospel of hatred, but a broad, tolerant, national spirit accepting the necessary political framework of the Union, but, within it, emphasising its own individuality and its own creative force and fruitfulness. With this standard of the past achievement and future promise of Unionism clearly before us, we shall be better able to judge both of the value of the arguments adduced in favour of Home Rule and of the inevitable consequences which would result from its adoption.

VIII.—IRELAND A NATION.

THE first four articles of this series have been devoted to the historical background of the Irish problem. In them I traced first of all the disastrous effects of separatism upon the political, social, and economic life of Ireland in the eighteenth century. I then showed the persistence of those effects, in spite of the general revival due to the Union, creating a critical economic situation which called for an active policy of social and industrial reconstruction. In place of such a policy Ireland was visited by the unspeakable calamity of Cobdenism, aggravating every social evil, and undermining the very foundations of the economic life of the community. The by-product of this policy of devastation and disunion has been modern Irish Nationalism. In the British party system the Nationalist movement

found its opportunity, and in Parnell a leader who could take it. But British national instinct proved too strong for the party system, even with a Gladstone to lend a lofty tone of moral fervour to log-rolling. Home Rule was twice defeated, and its defeat was followed by the policy of economic and social reconstruction initiated by Mr. Balfour, which by quiet and unostentatious steps has in barely twenty years lifted Ireland from despair and anarchy to the prosperity and progress which are to-day visible on every hand. In the next three articles I endeavoured to show that the Unionist policy, so far from being exhausted, is in fact only approaching its most effective and fruitful stage, when, upon the sound foundation now established, the great economic instruments of a national tariff and a national policy of internal communications can build up the superstructure of a rich and splendid national life such as Ireland has never dreamt of in her troubled and distracted past. It is by the light of that past and by the possibilities of that future which I have outlined that we can best judge the various arguments that are advanced for the policy of breaking up the Union, and the consequences which that policy must involve both for Great Britain and for Ireland.

Of all the arguments for Home Rule that have been advanced in the past, or that will be advanced in the present controversy, there is only one which proceeds from any really intense conviction or represents a clear and definite policy. That is the argument that Ireland is a nation, and as such possesses, to quote the language of a letter which appeared in the columns of the *Morning Post* recently, an "inalienable right to absolute self-government without a shadow of control by any foreign State." National independence, that and nothing else, is the only aim and object of Home Rule as expounded by Nationalist speakers to Nationalist audiences. Home Rule, in any form in which a British Government may grant it, is simply to be an instalment of the larger policy, a stepping stone to the "great goal of national independence," to quote

a recent phrase of Mr. Redmond's. It was the same speaker who a few months ago thus consoled an American Irish audience, somewhat apprehensive lest Home Rule should mean a watering down of the national demand: "I answer in the words of Parnell, 'Let us get this first and then demand more.' We do not set a limit to the march of the nation." It would be easy to multiply quotations, from Parnell's speeches down to the articles that appear daily in a score of Nationalist newspapers. But the gist of them all is the same: Ireland is a nation, as separate and distinct as France or Denmark; Great Britain is a foreign conqueror, against whom Ireland is entitled to recover her national independence, whether by force of arms or by the more convenient, if more circuitous, method of "Home Rule first and then demand more." Other arguments there may be in plenty, for English and Colonial consumption. But the only argument which has either meaning or force for those who have consistently demanded Home Rule for over a generation, and who to-day once again control the political situation, is the argument based on Ireland's right, in Parnell's words, as a nation "to direct her own course among the peoples of the world."

But in what sense is Ireland a nation? By what facts of geography, or race, or history can the claim be justified? Geographically, the British Isles form a single, compact, clearly-defined island group, a unit in every sense in which New Zealand or Japan, Italy or Denmark, can be regarded as units. Racially, the United Kingdom is a single and distinct area. Over the whole of this area the same Celtic and Teutonic elements are blended and intermingled in varying proportions; nowhere outside it do the same racial components exist in similar combination. Throughout the United Kingdom a single national language is spoken. The existence of linguistic islands where the older Celtic speech survives is no more a disproof of national unity than the local survival of Breton or Basque in the case of France, and if it were, Wales and Scotland

would both have a much stronger claim than Ireland to the recognition of their separate nationality. Historically, the United Kingdom has been united under a single Crown for three hundred years. Ireland was under the English Crown for four centuries before that. If the authority of the Crown during that period was but ineffectively enforced over large areas of the country, that was no less true of Scotland or even France during the same period. Even before that Ireland was not a nation, but a region over which Celtic chiefs and Danish invaders strove with varying success for mastery. By every ordinary test of nationhood, by continuity of historic union, by unity of territory, of race and speech, by clear differentiation from the outside world in each of these respects, the United Kingdom is emphatically a single political unit, a nation in the fullest sense of the word. By the same tests Ireland is most emphatically not a nation, but an integral part of a greater whole.

But I may be told that none of these tests of nationality is essential; that it is sufficient if a Nationalist sentiment exists, and if a demand for national separation is expressed through the ordinary political channels. That there is such a sentiment no one denies, though there are many, from Fintan Lalor downwards, who have doubted whether with the mass of the people it has ever been anything but "forced and factitious," except when linked to some perfectly definite grievance like the system of land tenure. How that sentiment originated, how its various incongruous threads were woven during the last century into a single tradition of hostility to England, has already been described in these articles. But given that sentiment; given the claim that it is sufficient in itself to constitute a nation; then it follows, inevitably, by that self-same test of sentiment, that Ireland is not one nation, but two nations. Over against the Celtic legend of resistance to the invader there is the legend of the English and Scottish settler planted to maintain British power and British ideals in Ireland. Over

against the Catholic version of Irish history stands the Protestant version. Over against the Nationalist story of Ireland's sufferings under the Union stands Ulster's record of achievement during the same time and subject to the same conditions. Over against the sentiment of separatism there is the sentiment, incomparably the more intense and stubborn sentiment to-day, of those who claim the right to remain full citizens of a single undivided kingdom.

The Unionist "nation" in Ireland is no doubt a minority. It numbers a million and a quarter at most out of a total population of four millions and a quarter. On a mere count of heads, on a mere vote at the polls, it is less than a third of Ireland's population. But when it comes to questions which go to the very roots of a Constitution, questions of national existence, questions for which men are prepared to fight and to die, then the counting of heads or votes which suffices for ordinary current legislation ceases to have any meaning. What has to be counted, then, are the moral and material forces at play, the determination, the resources, the organised "man-power," which each party represents. And by those tests the Unionists of Ireland are fully entitled to claim that they should count for no less than their opponents.

But, after all, as far as the Nationalist argument is concerned, it is immaterial whether Ulster should count for a quarter or a half of Ireland. The essential point is that the mere existence of Ulster and of Unionist sentiment in Ireland destroys the whole Nationalist case for Home Rule. If the mere existence of a Nationalist sentiment confers upon Nationalist Ireland an "inalienable right to absolute self-government" as against England, then, inevitably, Unionist sentiment confers that same "inalienable right" upon Ulster as against the Nationalists. Every argument that can justify one-fifteenth of the population of the United Kingdom in demanding separation from the United Kingdom is a stronger justification for one-quarter of Ireland in insisting that it shall not be governed from

Dublin. Every argument that would give the majority in Ireland a right to compel the minority in Ireland to acquiesce in Home Rule is a ten-fold stronger argument for the right of the United Kingdom to compel an insignificant minority in the United Kingdom to acquiesce in the Union. If the two Irelands were separated by an absolutely definite frontier the difficulty might conceivably be solved, from the Nationalist point of view, by leaving Ulster inside the Union, and extending Home Rule to Nationalist Ireland alone. But the two Irelands are not thus separable. They are inextricably entangled together through all the border countries. And that being so, there is no possible escape from the unanswerable dilemma with which we can confront the Nationalist argument—the only argument that has any shred of real purpose or will power behind it. The fact is that on the Nationalist basis there can be no solution except unconditional surrender on one side or the other. Stripped of all the flummery about local self-government, the issue reduces itself to this: Are the Nationalists to surrender a fictitious claim based on no essential foundation of geography, or race, or history; or is the British nation, at the bidding of a Parliamentary faction, to disband a kingdom which nature and history have made one, and to surrender to that same faction the lives and fortunes of over a million of its citizens who bitterly protest against their betrayal?

In the sense in which the Nationalists use the word, Ireland never has been a nation, is not a nation to-day, and never can be a nation. But there is a sense in which Ireland can be a nation, and in which she suffers grievously to-day from the absence of a true national life. There is such a thing as a national life, irrespective of political machinery, based on community of sentiment, on local pride and patriotism, on the development of a national individuality in character, in industry, in art, in literature, a national life which looks mainly to the future, and, if it looks back to the past, looks to it for example and encouragement, and not

for fuel to feed partisan rancour. Scotland enjoys such a national life to-day within the framework of the Union. Ireland, unfortunately, has never yet attained to it. The signs of its coming, the first harbingers of a national springtime, were, indeed, increasing on every hand during the years of political truce and economic revival. In agricultural co-operation, in industry, in art, a new and a real Irish patriotism has of late years brought men and women, of every shade of political opinion and religious belief, together in working to do something, not for Nationalism or for Unionism, but for Ireland.

All this promise is now to be killed to help an embarrassed Government to cling on to office for a few months longer. The struggle over Home Rule means the revival, in all their bitterest forms, of the divisions which are fatal to any real national life in Ireland. A surrender to Nationalism would intensify and make permanent that bitterness both in Ireland and in England, just as racial feud was embittered and stereotyped by a similar surrender in South Africa thirty years ago. There is, indeed, much in the conditions of South Africa that bears strongly upon the case of Ireland. There, too, all progress was barred by a nationalism which claimed for one section of a mixed population the exclusive right to be regarded as true citizens of the country. There, too, nationalism based itself on a legend of hatred and hostility towards the nation to which the other half of the white population belonged, towards the flag which all their most passionate instincts were enlisted to defend, and towards that Imperial connection which was essential to the welfare and progress of South Africa. The triumph of Krugerism would have destroyed all possibility of a true national life in South Africa. Only by its overthrow were the conditions created under which a real South African nation, with a real South African patriotism, can come into existence. Even now South Africans of both races are learning to recognise the names of Rhodes and Kruger, and all they stood for

in stubborn resolve or far-sighted statesmanship, as parts of a common South African heritage, and to take an equal pride in the heroism of the South Africans who held Wagon Hill and of the South Africans who so nearly dislodged them. How far are Irishmen still from the point where they can unite in recognising the common Irish patriotism of Wolfe Tone and of Castle-reagh? Yet there can be no true national life in Ireland till Unionist can join with Nationalist in rendering ungrudging tribute to the sincerity and to the dæmonic power of Parnell, and till Nationalist can join with Unionist in recognising Parnell's failure to have been for Ireland's good. The one thing that Ireland needs above all others, perhaps, is a true national life, with the vigour and individual inspiration and purpose that spring from it. But only by the final defeat of a false and narrow nationalism can Ireland become a nation.

IX.—THE COLONIAL ARGUMENT.

THE primary and only real argument for Home Rule, and by that I mean the only argument which has any real purpose or will-power behind it, the only argument which inspires the Nationalist members in their demand, is the argument that Ireland is and ought to be a separate nation. It is an argument brought forward in defiance both of nature and of history, which have made the United Kingdom essentially one, and in wilful disregard of the unanswerable dilemma created by the existence of Ulster, but such as it is, it is the real argument, and implies a perfectly definite policy of separation, whether that policy is carried out at one stroke or by instalments. But there are other arguments or pleas for yielding to the Nationalist demand which I would describe as unreal, or, at any rate, secondary, which figure much more prominently in the controversy, and which carry weight with large sections of the public to whom the crude argument for

national separation would be utterly unacceptable. They are secondary in this sense, that they have not inspired the Home Rule demand, but have only been devised in order to provide a justification for yielding to it, and unreal, in so far as very few of those who use them have any clear idea of what they really imply, or any other object in using them than popularising a policy decided upon for very different reasons.

By far the most popular of these, at the present time, is the Colonial argument. It is an argument at once easily understood and attractive. Why should Ireland not be given Home Rule, when "Home Rule" has been given to the Colonies? What danger or harm can there be, to quote an illustration used more than once by Mr. Redmond, and recently adopted by the Solicitor-General to add "one more Home Rule Parliament to the 28 Home Rule Parliaments already existing in the Empire"? Why should not Home Rule make Ireland loyal and contented as it made Canada loyal and contented after the Rebellion of 1837, or as it made the Transvaal loyal and contented on the very morrow of the Boer War? But the attractiveness of the argument is purely verbal. It is based on a complete disregard of essential differences between Irish and Colonial conditions, and upon a continuous confusion of language and thought, which conceals its real inconclusiveness. Nothing, indeed, can be more typical of the confusion of thought, and of the thorough unreality of the argument, than the reference, just quoted, to the "28 Home Rule Parliaments." For how is this list of "28 Home Rule Parliaments" made up? It includes, first of all, besides the United Kingdom Parliament, the Parliaments of the four Dominions of Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, with the separate self-governing Colony of Newfoundland, endowed in practice with every power of sovereign nations except the control of foreign policy and the decision of peace and war. It also includes 19 State or Provincial Assemblies

within the three first-named Dominions, enjoying certain limited powers in widely differing degrees. Lastly, it includes the local Assemblies of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark, and the Isle of Man, representative bodies, it is true, but with powers so closely circumscribed by the authority of the Home Office as to be in essence little more than Crown Colonies. Are we, then, to understand that it will be a good thing for the United Kingdom if Ireland is set up on the same footing of almost complete separation, as Australia? Or that Ireland will be made loyal and contented by being deprived of her representation in the United Kingdom Parliament and subjected to an autocratic Governor appointed by the Home Secretary? Or only that there is something to be said for a system of Provincial Assemblies? There is, in truth, no conclusion worth anything that can be drawn from so sloppy an argument.

But leaving, for the moment, the confusion as to what kind of Government it is intended to set up under Home Rule, let us deal with the main contention that "Home Rule" has been successful in the Colonies, and that the refusal of it to Ireland is the cause of every Irish difficulty. And to avoid all ambiguity let us first make quite clear what is meant by the expression Home Rule. What is it that Ireland has been denied? Is it political liberty, free self-governing institutions? Obviously not; the citizens of the United Kingdom in Ireland already have every liberty and privilege enjoyed by their fellow-citizens in any other part of the Kingdom, and greater liberties and privileges than those enjoyed by their fellow-subjects in any other part of the Empire. What is meant by "Home Rule" in the case of Ireland is, therefore, clearly not the establishment of a free government, but the establishment of a separate government. But when we ask what it is that has been so successful in the Colonies, the true answer is not separate government, but free institutions. Separate government in the case of the

Colonies has always been an inevitable consequence of their immense distance from this country, and of their wholly different economic conditions. Till free institutions were granted, separate government was anything but a success, and after they were granted it still created inevitable difficulties, some of which have been solved by the abolition of separate government for all important purposes over immense areas, while others still wait to be dealt with by some form of closer Imperial Union.

Let me go back to the origins of the British system of Colonial self-government. The Canadian Rebellion of 1837 was not a rising in favour of separation, or against Imperial interference in local affairs. The administration of the Canadian provinces was already separate, and the local authorities enjoyed a pretty free hand, in practice, if not in theory. The rising was against a system under which the popular Chamber was overridden locally by an Executive and a Legislative Council, both of which were entirely in the hands of a narrow local oligarchy of ruling families who clustered round Government House. Lord Durham, in his famous report, attributed the troubles to their true cause, the disregard of public opinion, and proposed that, in future, the Governor should govern in accordance with the advice given by Ministers enjoying the confidence of the popular Assembly. This was done a few years later in Canada, and the system rapidly extended to all the British Colonies. Lord Durham's insight was justified by the result. But it is perfectly clear that the essence of Lord Durham's policy was not the setting up of a new form of separate government, such as is proposed to be set up in Ireland under Home Rule, but simply the concession of those free political institutions which already prevailed in the United Kingdom.

The establishment of free responsible government in the various Colonies left the question of separation of government, both as between each Colony and the

Mother Country, and as between the different Colonies, very much where it had been. But sooner or later the Colonies found the system of political separation under which they lived a serious weakness and inconvenience. The North American Colonies found themselves at a serious disadvantage in all political and commercial negotiations with the United States. None of them individually was in a position to deal with the vast territories of the North-West, either for the purposes of development or for defence against American occupation. A common trade policy, a common railway policy, a common system of banking and of commercial legislation, were all essential to the development of their great resources, and only a common government could provide them. It was the recognition of the external weakness and internal unprogressiveness of separation that forced the North American Colonies, scattered though they were over a distance of 4,000 miles, and separated by natural obstacles which at the time seemed almost impassable, to unite in a single strong confederation. Similar motives, at a later period, influenced the federation of the Australian Colonies. In South Africa, after the war, the constant friction over railway and Customs agreements, continually threatening to break down, embittered the relations of the different Colonies and maintained an atmosphere of uncertainty discouraging to all enterprise. The existence of four separate Governments in a country essentially one prevented all effective dealing with cattle plagues or locusts, which knew no political boundaries, with labour and native problems, or with defence. Union was imperative, and South African statesmen, realising the essential racial and economic unity of South Africa, decided to frame their Union not on the federal model of Canada or Australia, but on the absolute legislative union of the United Kingdom.

The whole trend of Colonial development, so far from being an argument for separatism, affords conclusive

evidence of the weakness of separatism and of the need for closer union wherever geographical and economic conditions have made union in any degree feasible. In this respect they have but repeated on a larger scale, territorially, and much more rapidly, the process which by successive stages created the United Kingdom. The Union between Great Britain and Ireland was forced on by precisely the same causes as those which united the various groups of Colonies—weakness in face of a common danger, internal friction, and economic rivalries. And it was to have been accompanied, and was, in fact, eventually followed, by that political emancipation of the people from the domination of a narrow oligarchy, which, in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, would have been impossible except under the Union. Pitt's aim, in fact, was to combine the policies of Lord Durham and of Sir John Macdonald in Canada in a single policy, and that aim was fulfilled. To go back upon Pitt's great work, to set up again the separatism that proved so disastrous to Ireland and threatened such danger to Great Britain in the past, would be not merely to reverse the historical development of the United Kingdom, but to defy the whole accumulated experience of our Colonial Empire.

Freedom and Union, *Imperium et Libertas*, these have been the watchwords of strength, progress, and prosperity in every quarter of the Empire. Why should we substitute for them the watchwords of disunion and faction rule? In which of the Dominions would a proposal to break up the balance of the Constitution, by taking one province or group of provinces out of the whole and setting it up on a separate footing, be tolerated? Would Canada for an instant yield to a demand that the Roman Catholic French majority in the province of Quebec should be allowed to set itself up as a national or quasi-national State outside the Dominion Constitution, and to drag the Protestant Maritime Provinces along with it, on the ground that they, too, were once peopled by a French and Roman

Catholic population? Would not every Dominion resist such a proposal, by force if necessary, just as the United States resisted it when attempted, with good Constitutional justification, by the Southern States? And yet we are to be asked, on the strength of the Colonial analogy, to dismember a Kingdom far more ancient, far more compact, far more intimately united by every social and economic link than any of the Dominions!

But to make the chain of reasoning for the Union even more complete, the history of our Colonial Empire provides two examples of separatism as "exceptions to prove the rule." The first is the example of Newfoundland, which is geographically in much the same position to Canada as Ireland is to England and which has, so far, consistently remained outside the Dominion. There is, however, this point of difference, that whereas Ireland is absolutely dependent, economically, on the British market, Newfoundland is not dependent on the Canadian market, but enjoys almost a monopoly in the world's market in one particular commodity, namely, codfish, upon which it manages to support its small population. But nobody can doubt that with its favoured geographical position, and with its great natural resources, Newfoundland would have been far more rapidly developed and would have attained a higher standard of individual well-being if it had been part of the Dominion. Few Newfoundlanders but would admit this in private; none dare avow it in public, such is the prejudice which for party purposes has been worked up against "annexation" among the populace. The point is one worth noting by those who imagine that after a spell of Home Rule, however disastrous, Ireland would voluntarily re-enter the Union.

If Newfoundland illustrates the drawbacks of separatism in its purely economic aspect, the history of the Transvaal after 1881 shows what Nationalist Home Rule has involved in conditions by no means without a resemblance to those of Ireland. The surrender of

Mr. Gladstone to the Boer rising, after his absolute refusal to reconsider the question of the annexation, was in every essential feature a mere anticipation of his surrender to Parnell and Irish anarchy five years later. The surrender was glossed over by precisely the same language about "magnanimity" and "justice," about "union of hearts" and "reconciliation," of which so much has been heard during Home Rule debates. There were the same assurances about the protection of the loyalists, the same references to proper safeguards, embodied in a Convention which neither side had any intention of keeping, and to Imperial suzerainty, of which we have already had a specimen in Mr. Churchill's Belfast speech. The surrender was followed not by reconciliation, but by increased bitterness. Afrikaner nationalism, so far from being appeased, was simply encouraged to fresh ambition, just as Irish Nationalism would be if its political strategy should at last succeed in wresting Home Rule from the embarrassments of British party politicians. So far from accepting the terms of the Pretoria Convention as a final settlement, Kruger, resolved, in the true spirit of Parnell, to "fix no boundary to the march of the nation," pressed first for a revised Convention, in which most of the original safeguards and restrictions were omitted, and then for the complete abrogation of every trace of British authority over the Transvaal. In the end his policy of foreign intrigue and domestic misgovernment compelled intervention, and Gladstone's surrender was made good again at the cost of £200,000,000 and of 20,000 good lives.

So much for the argument that there is any justification or encouragement in our Colonial history for the policy of separatism. There is another and, in its essence, very different argument, which is not that our Colonial experience justifies us in giving Ireland Colonial self-government, but that it illustrates the advantages of Federal union over legislative union, and that Irish Home Rule is only intended as the first step

in a process of federalising the United Kingdom and helping on the federation of the Empire. With that argument I propose to deal in the next article.

X.—THE FEDERAL ARGUMENTS.

OF those who talk vaguely about the Colonial argument for Home Rule the great majority, while anxious to believe that Home Rule will in some way finally satisfy the Nationalist demand and create in Ireland the moral atmosphere of a self-governing Dominion, endeavour at the same time to persuade themselves that all that is really intended by Home Rule is the first step in a process of federalising the United Kingdom on Canadian or Australian lines. The idea of a Federal Constitution for the United Kingdom is, on the face of it, not without considerable attractions. It suggests a saving of Parliamentary time, a system of vigorous and effective local government consistent with an equally vigorous and effective national unity, a reconciliation, in fact, of the Irish Nationalist claim with the inherent needs of a congested political system. It is this idea of which public opinion in the Dominions approves when it passes resolutions in favour of Home Rule, and it is on this note that Nationalist speakers like Mr. T. P. O'Connor have deliberately played when visiting the Dominions. It is this idea which to-day, in a hazy sort of fashion, underlies the thinking of most moderate Liberals on the subject of Home Rule, and to which Liberal speakers most freely appeal. Even Unionists have not been uninfluenced by the conception, and at the time of the Conference between the two parties in 1910 many of them expressed a willingness to give any proposal based on it at any rate a full and unbiassed consideration.

Now, whatever the merits or demerits of the notion of "Home Rule all round," with a Central Federal Parliament and Government for the United Kingdom

as a whole, the first question to ask is whether the Home Rule Bill which is now to be introduced can be made to fit in with such a scheme. And the only possible answer is that it cannot, and that if it could it would not be accepted by the Nationalists. The idea of Nationalist Home Rule and the idea of Federalism are, indeed, essentially incompatible. The essence of Federalism is uniformity of arrangement, a division of the functions of government over the whole area of the Federation, in accordance with a common principle. But there is no one so simple as to suppose that the coming Home Rule Bill will be based upon any principle applicable to the United Kingdom as a whole. What it will be based upon is a temporary compromise between the Nationalist Party's demand to govern Ireland and the anxiety of the Ministry to put in such restrictions and limitations upon that Government as may assuage the fears of its more hesitating supporters. The preamble of the Bill may express a pious hope that Home Rule may some day be extended to the rest of the United Kingdom. But we can be quite certain that its clauses will be drafted without the slightest consideration of their applicability to Scotland, England, or Wales. Federalism, indeed, like the Reform of the Upper House promised in the preamble of the Parliament Bill, is simply a pretence hung out to delude those who wish to be deluded.

Take the crucial instance of finance. Every Federal system implies a clear division of finance between the Federal and State Governments corresponding to the division between the functions of Government. One set of taxes, which invariably includes Customs, goes to the Central Government for its administration; another set is available for the purposes of the State Governments. Under the Home Rule Bill, as has already been indicated by Ministerial statements, and is obvious from the facts of the financial situation, the Irish Government is to have the spending of all the revenue raised in Ireland, though not apparently the control of Custom

and Excise. It is, indeed, to be subsidised at the expense of the taxpayers of Great Britain, as far as Old Age Pensions and Land Purchase are concerned. How can such a financial arrangement be applied all round? If Scotland, Wales, and England are each to spend the whole of their revenues for local purposes, and, further, have their Old Age Pensions provided by the Federal Exchequer, from what source, outside the moon, is that Federal Exchequer itself to derive the revenue required to carry on the work of the Federal Government?

The very fact that the case of Ireland is to be dealt with first as "prior in point of time and urgency," to use Mr. Asquith's phrase, shows that the Government has neither clearly thought out, nor even seriously contemplated, a Federal scheme. Uniformity in Constitutional and financial arrangements is of the very essence of Federalism. There cannot, in fact, be any workable Federal Parliament without it, as will become obvious once again as soon as the question of the position of the Irish members at Westminster comes to be discussed. There is, however, this common exception, that territories which are in a disturbed condition, or are not sufficiently developed to be able to bear the double financial burden of supporting a State Government as well as their share of the Federal Government, remain under the direct administration of the Federal Government till such time as they are fit for the responsibilities of their own State Government. If the Government were really proceeding on Federal lines, it would either establish simultaneously over the whole United Kingdom a Federal system which limited the powers and responsibilities of the States or provinces so narrowly that even Ireland could support its own provincial Government without encroaching upon Federal sources of revenue; or else it would start by establishing "Home Rule all round" in Great Britain, retaining Ireland under direct United Kingdom control till its financial position had considerably improved. Irish Home Rule is only first in point of time and urgency from the

separatist point of view; from the Federalist point of view it would naturally and properly come last.

This is even more obvious when we regard the practical political consequences of Home Rule. The measure, if accepted by the Nationalists, will be accepted as a makeshift, an instalment of their national rights, and not as a permanent settlement. To get rid of the restrictions and limitations which it sets upon the "march of the nation" will be the first business of the Irish representatives both in Dublin and at Westminster. And by the very conditions of the case they are bound to be successful. Any scheme, for instance, under which the Irish Finance Minister, who has to provide the whole Government of Ireland, remains in complete ignorance as to what revenue he will have till the British Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced what Customs and Excise duties he means to impose, is obviously unworkable. Home Rule is bound to mean, sooner or later, complete Irish control of Customs and Excise. Other restrictions will be found equally unworkable, and will be openly abandoned or tacitly ignored. Long before Scotland or Wales, let alone England, achieve their demand for Home Rule—if demand there be—the last traces of any Federal element the Bill may contain will have disappeared.

Federalism, as far as the coming Home Rule Bill is concerned, may be dismissed as a mere sham due to deliberate or unconscious woolliness of thought. At the same time, it may be worth while to consider how far there is really any case for a genuine Federal scheme of Home Rule all round, which is supported either by Colonial experience or by special conditions in the United Kingdom. Does Colonial experience suggest the desirability of a Federal Constitution for the United Kingdom? The Dominions are by no means all based on the Federal plan. On the contrary, they present a whole gradation of Constitutional types, ranging from the loose Federation of Australia, through the close

confederation of Canada, to the South African Union, essentially unitary, but with a slight Federal reminiscence about its system of provincial local government, and the absolute union of the two islands of New Zealand. Each of these types is the outcome of peculiar geographical, economic, and historical conditions.

To understand the Federal system of Australia, it is essential to remember that, till comparatively recently, Australia consisted, to all intents, of four or five seaport towns, each with its own tributary agricultural and mining area, strung out, at distances varying from 500 to 1,300 miles, along the southern and eastern third of a coast line of nearly 9,000 miles looped round an unexplored and reputedly uninhabitable interior. Each of these seaports traded directly with the United Kingdom in competition with the others. With economic motives for union practically non-existent, with external factors awakening a general apprehension rather than confronting Australia with any immediate danger, it was impossible to find the driving power to overcome local jealousies and to secure more than a minimum of union. The Commonwealth Constitution is a makeshift which, as the internal trade of Australia grows, and as railway communications are developed, will inevitably be amended in the direction of increasing the power of the Commonwealth and diminishing that of the States. In Canada the economic link between Canada proper and the Maritime Provinces was, forty years ago, almost as weak as in Australia. British Columbia, which it was hoped to include in the Confederation, was then separated by a journey of months from Eastern Canada, and was, indeed, much nearer to Australia or New Zealand. Quebec, with its racial and religious peculiarities, added another problem. That the Confederation was, nevertheless, such a close and strong one was due both to the menace of American power to the South, and to the terrible example of the weakness of the American Constitution as made manifest by the Civil War. Yet, even so, Sir John Macdonald,

the father of the Confederation, frankly declared Confederation a necessary evil:

"As regards the comparative advantages of a Legislative and a Federal Union I have never hesitated to state my own opinions. . . . I have always contended that if we could agree to have one Government and one Parliament . . . it would be the best, the cheapest, the most vigorous, the strongest system of government we could adopt."

This also was the view of the framers of the South African Union. The circumstances of South Africa enabled them to carry it into effect. For all its extent, South Africa is geographically a single homogeneous country with no marked internal boundaries. It is peopled by two white races everywhere intermixed in varying proportions, and nowhere separated into large compact blocks. The immense preponderance and central position of the Rand mining industry makes South Africa practically a single economic system. The very bitterness of the long political and racial struggle which had preceded intensified the argument for really effective union.

If we compare the conditions in the United Kingdom with those of the Dominions, it is obvious at once that there is no possible analogy with the conditions of Canada or Australia, but a considerable analogy with South Africa and New Zealand. The British Isles are but little larger than the New Zealand group, and much more compact and homogeneous. Their close economic intercourse, the presence of two races with a history of strife behind them, but compelled by their inextricable geographical blending to confront the necessity of union, are reproduced in the conditions of South Africa. In so far then as Colonial analogy bears upon the question at all, it is obviously in favour of our present Legislative Union rather than of any system of federal Home Rule.

The actual domestic conditions of the United Kingdom confirm this conclusion. The need for dealing with the excessive congestion of Parliamentary work is obvious.

But so is the need for essential unity in social legislation, in the general control of education, in almost every matter, in fact, which could be assigned to bodies as large as the federal units contemplated under any scheme of Home Rule all round. Such a scheme would only create difficulties and duplicate discussion, unless the powers of the subordinate units were limited to the most purely local matters. And in that case the most efficient area for the subordinate units would be a much smaller one. For the establishment of a system of provincial councils built up by the federation of adjoining counties and county boroughs, much as the London County Council is built up by its component boroughs, there is much to be said. Many of the powers at present exercised by those bodies could be more effectively administered by somewhat larger units. Much of the inequality of financial burdens connected with the cost of education, of poor law, of asylums and other public institutions, of housing schemes, of roads, and the distribution of power might in this way be redressed, without further drafts on the national exchequer. Nor might it be impossible to extend to these new councils certain limited additional powers, administrative or legislative, beyond those at present enjoyed by county councils. But such a scheme is very far removed from what is usually known as Home Rule all round, and the very fact that it would naturally divide Ireland into at least four separate units would make it wholly unacceptable to the Nationalists. It would have to rest upon its own merits, and not upon the attempt to reconcile irreconcilable political ideas.

But the real difficulty of our Parliamentary system is not so much the excess of actual work as the intense friction generated by the conflict and confusion of principles and objectives which arises from the fact that the same Parliament has to attempt to fulfil two tasks, differing essentially in kind and not merely in degree, namely, the government of the United Kingdom and the general government of a world-wide Empire. What

is wanted is not so much a division of the internal work of the United Kingdom between different bodies, but a separation of the internal work of the United Kingdom as a whole from that of the Empire. The need of our time, the cure for Parliamentary congestion, is not Home Rule all round, but Imperial Federation, not the separation of Irish or Scottish Parliaments from the United Kingdom Parliament, but the clear separation of the Parliament of the United Kingdom from the Parliament or Council of the Empire.

No form of Home Rule can advance that most desirable solution. The creation of an additional Dominion in the shape of Ireland would merely add one to the number of units to be considered, and would be contrary to the spirit of the resolution passed at the 1887 Conference—that it was desirable “wherever and whenever practicable, to group together under a federal union those Colonies which are geographically united.” The problem would be no more affected by the setting up of a federal Constitution for the United Kingdom than it would be if South Africa decided, after all, to give her provinces federal powers, or Australia carried unification by a referendum. The notion that the Dominions could somehow come inside the United Kingdom Federation, which would thus be the starting point of Imperial Federation, though it sometimes figures in Home Rule speeches, is a sheer absurdity. The terms and conditions of a United Kingdom Federation would necessarily differ in almost every respect from those of an Imperial Federation, and a Constitution framed for the one object would be unworkable for the other. Nor would it ever be acceptable to the Dominions, which regard themselves potentially, if not actually, as the equals of the United Kingdom as a whole. From their point of view, the United Kingdom might almost as well be asked to step inside the Australian Commonwealth as that they should be asked to enter in as additional members under any scheme of “Home Rule all round.” Home Rule is no more a step towards Imperial Federation than it is a

step towards United Kingdom Federation, or than it is to the establishment of a workable Autonomy on Colonial lines. It is essentially a destructive and not a constructive policy.

XI.—THE MEANER ARGUMENTS.

WHATEVER else may be said of the various arguments in favour of Home Rule which we have so far examined, they at any rate profess to appeal to some general political principle; to the principle of nationalism, to the principle of Colonial self-government, or to the principle of federal devolution. But there is a very different argument that is sometimes openly proclaimed, but far more often reserved for the frankness of private conversation, the argument which appeals directly to the meaner motives of political convenience or financial gain. "Give Home Rule and get rid of the eternal Irish problem in our party politics," such is the proposition, often with a significant hint that we Unionists are fools to saddle ourselves with the permanent handicap of an adverse Irish vote. "Give Home Rule and cut your losses" is another and even meaner variant of the same theme, which no less a person than Mr. Birrell has openly avowed.

To arguments of this kind Unionism has one direct and irrefutable answer. The United Kingdom does not exist for the convenience of the party politics of the day. It exists for the sake of its citizens, future as well as present, and our responsibility to those citizens is not one which we can assume or drop at our pleasure. We have a responsibility for the minority in Ireland. Are we to deny to that minority its right to the full citizenship of the United Kingdom, and all that that citizenship means in political liberty, in religious equality, in the protection of British justice, just because some seventy members of the House of Commons choose to make themselves troublesome? We

have a responsibility for the majority in Ireland as fellow citizens in the United Kingdom—destined, we believe, to be prosperous and contented citizens of the United Kingdom—by the light of which we must interpret their claim for separation, even if we admit its reality and its conviction. We have a responsibility for the United Kingdom as a whole, to do nothing that can impair its national strength or impede its future development. If that responsibility involves expenditure in Ireland, that is not “our loss,” but our present duty and our prospective gain. The suggestion that “we” should cut “our” losses presupposes, in fact, that very separatism for which it argues. It has no meaning for Unionists, whose country is not Great Britain, but the whole United Kingdom.

But there is another answer, one which can appeal even to those who are not true Unionists, who recognise no duty or responsibility towards Ireland, but who are prepared to look at things simply from the British half of the separatist point of view. Great Britain cannot cut its losses by giving Ireland Home Rule, or by doing so get rid of Irish problems, any more than it can get rid of Ireland as a geographical fact. Ireland is not a Jonah that can simply be thrown overboard to the fishes; after the passage of a Home Rule Bill it will remain just where it is now, with all its present problems still unsettled, and with an abundant crop of new problems for the future. To relegate those problems outside of the discussions of the British Parliament is impossible; in one form or another they will come back. *Hiberniam expellas furca tamen usque recurret.* The promise of relief from the Parliamentary jettison of Ireland is as unrealisable as it is immoral.

The impossibility of “cutting the loss” is, in fact, already admitted, as far as the immediate future is concerned. We are now told, in the stilted eloquence of Mr. Churchill, that “the high policy of the British Realm does not hamper itself with such ill-judged economies.” The “loss” is to continue, and for the first time it will be a real loss. Hitherto there has been

no real loss, but only a capital expenditure on the part of the United Kingdom, under United Kingdom control, on the present development of Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom for the future benefit of the whole. Under the scheme indicated at Belfast the taxpayers of Great Britain are to pay for an expenditure under Irish control, on an Irish development from which they are to expect no return. This is not cutting a loss, but creating a loss, both of the sums already spent and of the expenditure to be incurred in future.

And what of the prospect of getting rid of the Irish question in Parliament? From all the indications so far given it would seem that the new Home Rule Bill will, in its main outlines, follow the plan of 1893. It will establish in Ireland a national Government, subject to a variety of restrictions upon its powers, and will maintain a reduced Irish representation at Westminster in order to furnish some constitutional justification for those restrictions and some colourable support for the pretence that a federal scheme is seriously contemplated. Such a measure of Home Rule is certain to involve, not a diminution, but a multiplication of Irish controversies in Parliament. By the very nature and ideals of the Nationalist Party its first aim will be to get rid of the restrictions imposed by the Bill. But even if there were no Nationalist Party, the restrictions are of a kind which no free Government can well submit to. It is true that the free Governments in the Dominions have so far submitted to certain restrictions upon their complete independence, more particularly in respect of the conduct of foreign affairs. But that system has only worked in the past because the powers reserved by the Imperial Government are powers in the exercise of which the Dominions have hitherto had very little direct interest; it is rapidly becoming unworkable. The restrictions to be imposed on Ireland, on the other hand, such as the control of Customs and Excise, of external trade, shipping, or postal services, are matters of direct and immediate interest to any Irish

Government. One by one they are bound to go by the board.

But the process of getting rid of the restrictions will not tend either to the saving of Parliamentary time or to the peace of mind of British Ministers. Each stage in the process will be accompanied by friction between the Governments, and by long and bitter discussions in the British House of Commons. The various safeguards enumerated by Mr. Churchill are, no doubt, worthless as a real protection to individuals or classes in Ireland. But they will, at any rate, serve this purpose: that they will afford an excuse for raising discussion in Parliament over every act of the Irish Executive, and over every Bill presented to the Irish Legislature, and throughout all these controversies the Nationalist delegates at Westminster will be there to throw their vote into the scale of the party which is prepared to buy it by abandoning the restrictions or by justifying acts of oppression or misgovernment in Ireland. So far from having got rid of Irish log-rolling, we shall only have it in an infinitely aggravated form. If the Irish members vote on every subject, then, on most subjects, they will simply be casting an irresponsible vote as paid retainers of one party or the other. A Government has only to be prepared to yield to some specific demand from Dublin and it may be enabled to govern and legislate for Great Britain in direct opposition to the wishes of the majority whom it governs and for whom it legislates. If, on the other hand, the Irish members are only to vote on certain subjects, then we are face to face again with the possibility of two different majorities in the same House of Commons which proved so insoluble in 1893.

The fact is that the problem of how to eat your cake and still have it, how to give the Nationalists the separation they want while pretending not to give it, how to give Home Rule a federalist flavour without attempting to grapple with the immensely difficult problems which a genuine federal policy would involve, "passes the wit of man" to-day just as much as it did

twenty years ago. There is only one way of meeting the Nationalist demand without making our whole Parliamentary system unworkable, and that is to set up Ireland on exactly the same footing as one of the great Dominions, with no representatives at Westminster, but with the right to impose her own tariff, to conduct commercial treaties with foreign Powers, to raise her own forces by land and sea; to do everything, in fact, except to maintain recognised Embassies abroad, or to declare war. If the Nationalist demand is to be met, that is the only way to meet it, and we must simply shut our eyes to what is to happen in Ulster, and hope for the best. That may seem to most people, and with reason, an insane policy, but it has at least some method in its madness.

But even that policy, the policy of clean and straightforward separation, will not really get rid of the Irish problem in our national affairs, though it may do away with the direct interference of the Nationalist Party with the British party system. Ireland will still be there, just where it is to-day, and where it was before the Union. Its problems will still remain our problems, even if we have tried to shuffle off all responsibility for them. After all, are there any twenty years under the Union; even including the critical years of the Land War and of the Home Rule Bills, during which Irish affairs have caused nearly as much trouble and anxiety to British statesmen as the last twenty years before the Union, when Ireland enjoyed the fullest measure of Home Rule in her history? What would be the verdict of Pitt on those who, upon the eve of international developments, no less fateful, it may be, than the terrible struggle with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, bid us go back to the separatism that crippled his own great endeavours—and bid us do so on the plea of Parliamentary convenience?

If we could convert Ulster to Nationalism by a few speeches or by a string of paper safeguards; if we could further tow Ireland out into the South Atlantic and anchor her there, then, and only then, could we hope

to "get rid of the Irish difficulty" by Home Rule. As it is, there is only one way to get rid of the difficulty, and that is, not by shirking our responsibilities, but by shouldering them manfully; not by surrendering to a spurious and factitious nationalism, but by the final triumph of the great historic principle of national unity. Unionism has already, in large measure, cut through the main tap-root of Irish discontent, by dealing with the land question. A national fiscal policy will create a prosperity through mutual support, which no partner in the Union will seriously wish to sacrifice, and will, as a fruit of that prosperity, create an Irish revenue that will more than make good the so-called loss of to-day.

As for the political difficulty of the massed and irresponsible Irish vote in Parliament, which Parnell created, it only needs the restoration of really effective powers to a reformed and strengthened Second Chamber, or the provision of some more direct and immediate method of consulting the electors upon great constitutional changes, to make the Parnellite policy finally impossible. Once log-rolling is clearly recognised as incapable of producing results, no one will want to play so futile a game. The Nationalist Party's vote, as such, will no longer be worth the owner's while to sell, or any other party's while to buy. With all the motives for its cohesion, discipline, and suppression of independent thought thus removed, the Nationalist Party will inevitably, within a few years, either break up altogether or else fall within the orbit of one of the two great parties, the Unionist and the Radical-Socialist, which will contend for supremacy in the future. Whether it will then retain its hold upon the Irish constituencies will depend not upon promises of a never-fulfilled millennium, but upon the adaptability of the general policy of the party to which it is affiliated to the needs of Ireland. The Irish difficulty is well on its way to final extinction, through the economic and political reconstruction which the Unionist Party are, in any case, pledged to carry out.

To those who desire this, the appeal to cut our losses or shirk our political difficulties will stand revealed not only in its full meanness, but in its immeasurable folly.

XII.—FINANCE (I.)

FINANCE is a sound test and touchstone of policy at all times. It is a test by which the fate of the Government Home Rule proposals will largely be decided on this occasion. If those proposals are financially unsound the political structure based upon them cannot work. If they are politically unsound, then that unsoundness will inevitably reveal itself in an unworkable system of finance. Finance and policy are essentially correlated. You cannot have a separatist policy and Unionist finance, or a federal policy with separatist finance. Expenditure and political control must go hand in hand or friction, inefficiency, and waste will be the certain result.

Unionist finance is a perfectly simple and intelligible proposition. It is based on a common system of taxation and a common expenditure. The expenditure, in so far as it is apportioned locally, is determined by the needs of any particular locality, and has nothing to do with the revenue from that locality. On Unionist principles it is absurd to say that Ireland does not contribute to Imperial purposes, because local expenditure in Ireland exceeds the total revenue raised in Ireland. One might as well say that a working man is not paying his share of general national taxation if the schooling of his children should happen to cost the State more than the actual revenue he contributes. It is only when separation is assumed, for the purposes of argument, that the question of Ireland's Imperial contribution can enter at all. Nor is Unionist finance necessarily inelastic. The needs of particular classes or particular localities can be met, firstly, by a system of taxation judiciously distributed; secondly, by re-

missions of taxation to certain classes or areas; thirdly, by direct State expenditure aiming at raising the conditions of such classes or areas as are backward or depressed, and thus levelling up their taxable capacity to the common burden.

The actual financial union of Great Britain and Ireland dates to 1817, when the two Exchequers were amalgamated and the Irish National Debt of £113,000,000 merged in the common debt. For the next 35 years Ireland enjoyed exceptionally favourable treatment, in the full spirit of the Act of Union. Not only was the Irish taxpayer relieved of all special responsibility for the Irish Debt, but he was exempted from many of the most serious imposts, and the average taxation per head in Ireland was less than a quarter of what it was in Great Britain. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone began levelling up the taxes by raising the spirit duties and imposing income tax and succession duties. Following, as it did, on the very heels of the Famine, and accompanied by a removal of all protection to Ireland's main industry, Mr. Gladstone's financial policy was undoubtedly a violation of the whole intention and spirit of the Act of Union, and contributed seriously to the impoverishment of the country, to the growing agrarian crisis, and thus to the creation of the Nationalist Party.

In 1894, as a sequel of the Home Rule debates, the Financial Relations Commission was appointed, and reported in 1896. The Commissioners agreed unanimously that the additional taxation imposed by Mr. Gladstone was not justified by the existing circumstances, and that on a comparison of taxable capacity Ireland was more heavily taxed than Great Britain, her total taxation being nearly one-thirteenth of the whole, while her taxable capacity did not exceed one-twentieth at the very outside. The finding of the Commission really came to this: that the existing system of taxation, with its excessively high duties on a few commodities of daily use, pressed with undue severity on

poor men anywhere in the United Kingdom, especially if they were fond of tea, whiskey, or tobacco, and upon Ireland only inasmuch as poor persons with those tastes formed proportionately so large an element of her population. On Unionist principles the inequality thus indicated could be dealt with either by a return to the old system of exemptions, or by special expenditure on development in Ireland, or by the revision of the general fiscal system of the United Kingdom. All these remedies were suggested as possible by the Commissioners. It is the second of these that has so far been adopted, and with the most satisfactory results. The work of Land Purchase, of the Congested Districts Board, of the Department of Agriculture, the system of local loans, and the grant of Old Age pensions have all substantially raised the taxable capacity of the Irish people. The next step will be the inevitable change in our fiscal system, which will at the same time redress such inequality as still remains by lowering the tea and tobacco duties, and give Irish agricultural development generally the stimulus of protection, which has already proved so beneficial in the case of the "store" cattle industry.

Meanwhile the findings of the Commission, which really dealt with a question of equity of taxation, became the starting point of a legend as to the "robbing" of Ireland by England, which has recently developed into the direct charge that England has since 1817 exacted from Ireland a "tribute," or "blood-money," estimated by responsible persons like Lord MacDonnell and Professor Oldham at about £330,000,000, and by Nationalist politicians generally referred to as £400,000,000. This amazing calculation is arrived at by deducting from the taxation raised in Ireland since 1817 the sums actually spent for local government purposes in Ireland, and crediting the rest as "robbed." It ignores entirely the existence of the Irish Debt; it equally ignores the fact that during the greater part of the period in question local expenditure,

now so important, was, under *laissez faire* conditions, an infinitesimal fraction of general expenditure; it assumes that Ireland never should at any time have contributed a penny to the maintenance of the Crown, to her defence by land or sea, or to the conduct of her foreign policy. The full absurdity of the argument may be realised if we apply it to Great Britain. For, deducting local expenditure from British taxation during the same period, we should arrive at the result that the Union had robbed Great Britain not of £400,000,000, but of thousands of millions! Even if we admitted that Ireland's interest in the common defence of the realm has been less than England's, there remains the fact that the surplus of Irish revenue over local expenditure has never even covered the charge on the Irish Debt. Accordingly, if we are to take the separatist point of view we are fully entitled to say that Ireland has never contributed anything to Imperial purposes since 1817. The debt created by the Napoleonic War was no doubt excessive. But even without the Union Ireland could not have gone through the strain of those years without adding very substantially to the pre-Union debt of £28,000,000. The provision for even £80,000,000 of debt, at the higher rate of interest inevitable under Home Rule, coupled with a very minimum of expenditure for her own defence, would in the same period since 1817, certainly have exceeded the amount credited as "robbed" under the Union. A more preposterous cock and bull story than this fable about Ireland's stolen millions has never yet been served up to a simple-minded public.

At the present moment the financial position with regard to Ireland is as follows. The revenue collected in Ireland is, taking the figures of the last two years, about £11,700,000. The "true" Irish revenue, after allowing for excise and other duties paid in Ireland on goods subsequently consumed in Great Britain, and *vice versa*, is estimated by the Treasury at about

£10,000,000, though there are reasons for believing that it may be somewhat more, possibly £10,500,000. The local expenditure in Ireland for the same years was £11,300,000, showing a deficit of from £800,000 to £1,300,000. To this must be added in the future an increase, starting at £180,000 and rising to over £400,000, on the removal of the pauper disqualification for Old Age Pensioners, some £300,000 to £400,000 for the State contribution to Sickness and Unemployment Insurance, additional expenditure on Education, on the work of the Land Commission, Congested Districts Board, and other Departments, which will swell the deficit to £2,000,000 in the immediate future, and to £3,000,000, or even £4,000,000, in a few years time.

With a reform of our fiscal system, involving a reduction of the tea, tobacco, and sugar duties, by which some £2,800,000 are raised in Ireland at present and a substitution of duties on foreign manufactures and foodstuffs, which Ireland does not import in any quantity, the Irish revenue would at first drop by, perhaps, £1,500,000 to £2,000,000, and the deficit would be correspondingly increased. Before long increasing prosperity would begin to tell its tale. Revenue would begin to creep up, while expenditure, in some items at least, such as Land Purchase, and, with the settlement of the land question, Constabulary, would go down. Eventually there would be a surplus, and Ireland would pay her full share as an effective contributing member of the United Kingdom, under a system as fully adapted to her conditions as to those of any other part of the Kingdom. So much for the general financial policy of Union.

A policy of complete separation on Dominion lines, whatever its other objections, would, in the purely financial sense, involve no insuperable difficulties. Under such a policy Ireland would naturally have the complete control of every source of revenue, and be responsible for every form of expenditure, including

such military and naval establishments as she might care to pay for. By a rearrangement of the tariff, with some reduction on tea and tobacco, and an average 10 per cent. duty on all British and foreign manufactures and foodstuffs, it might be possible to bring up the total Irish revenue to £13,000,000. That such a tariff system would exclude Ireland from the privileged position she would otherwise enjoy in the British market is certain. In a subsequent article I shall endeavour to show that fiscal separation will be as injurious to Ireland in the Twentieth Century as in the Eighteenth. The only consequence I wish to draw for the present is that this revenue of £13,000,000 or so is not likely to be elastic, but may even tend to fall off. But for the moment it would cover present Irish expenditure and leave a small margin. But that margin would be quite insufficient to provide for the urgent needs of Education, for the completion of Land Purchase, or for the continuance of the policy of improvement loans, let alone for schemes of drainage or reclamation, subsidies to fast Transatlantic services, or further expensive developments of social legislation. In these respects Ireland would just have to do without and to drop behind England unless the money could be found by substantial economies.

But where are such economies to come from? The legend that the government of Ireland is grossly extravagant, and extravagant simply because it is an alien government holding down a recalcitrant people, is as baseless as the legend of the stolen millions. A typical instance of the "facts" by which the legend is supported is the assertion that there are 4,400 "officials" in Ireland as against 1,000 in Scotland, which is derived from certain Income Tax returns which in the case of Ireland include 1,622 Church of Ireland clergy, 341 bank officials, and other wholly non-official persons, in addition to the staffs of special departments like the Land Commission. It is possible that £200,000 a year might be saved by a better grouping of the various

Departments. And, undoubtedly, four or five times that amount could be saved if agrarian unrest and lawlessness were non-existent and the Constabulary could be reduced. But there is not the slightest reason for supposing that such a reduction will be possible as a consequence of Home Rule. Agrarian lawlessness in Ireland is the product of a desire for somebody else's land, not for Home Rule, and Home Rule will not cause it to disappear. Even if we leave Ulster out of account there is not likely to be any reduction in the Constabulary—and Ulster cannot be left out of account. There is the rock on which Home Rule must split, financially as in every other respect. If there were no Ulster problem Ireland might, under Colonial self-government, somehow or other manage to pay her way and avoid bankruptcy. But the Ulster problem is there, and it means either the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule scheme or civil war. And either alternative spells bankruptcy.

If, apart from its indirect consequences, a policy of complete separation is financially workable, so also is a really federal scheme. Such a scheme would assign to an Irish provincial Government the proceeds of certain local taxes, adding to them, if necessary, a federal contribution in the shape of a capitation allowance or rebate on Customs or Excise, and limiting the functions of the Irish Executive to such functions as could be carried on with the money thus provided. Other expenditure required in Ireland would then still be paid by the United Kingdom Exchequer and controlled administratively by United Kingdom officials. But such a policy, in substance identical with the policy of the Irish Councils Bill of 1907, has no more chance of being accepted in Ireland than the policy of complete separation has of being accepted in Great Britain. The Government policy is not a Colonial policy or a federal policy, but an attempt to reconcile these two wholly incompatible things in a measure which is framed to be passed and

not to work. How that policy is likely to work out in its financial aspect I propose to show in the next article.

XIII.—FINANCE (II).

IN the last article I showed that there are three intelligible financial policies for Ireland, each corresponding to a definite constitutional policy. There is the Unionist policy by which, while revenue and expenditure have to balance over the whole Union, revenue in any particular locality can be adjusted to taxable capacity, and expenditure to needs. This is the policy which is in operation to-day, and only requires some adjustment in the remission of the excessive indirect taxes which Free Trade, so-called, imposes upon the poorest classes of the population, to make it in every respect adapted to Ireland's needs. There is, secondly, the policy of complete financial independence corresponding to political independence on Colonial lines. As far as purely financial considerations go, that policy is perfectly workable. Its breakdown would be due to reasons, such as civil war in Ulster, or loss of trade with Great Britain, not primarily of a financial character. But it is a policy which necessarily involves a general tariff against British trade, and, consequently, is not likely to commend itself to an avowedly Free Trade Government. The third financial policy would be on purely federal lines, the functions and revenues of the Irish provincial administration being duly adjusted to each other. This, too, would be financially workable. But it would not be acceptable to the Nationalists, who have already rejected a similar proposal. We can now proceed to examine various financially unworkable proposals, corresponding to politically unworkable schemes.

There are, first of all, the financial proposals of the Home Rule Bill of 1886. Under that Bill the Irish revenue was to consist of the gross revenue collected in Ireland from Imperial and local taxes. Customs and Excise were to be fixed and collected Imperially.

Out of this revenue, then calculated at £8,350,000, Ireland was to contribute £1,000,000 towards the Constabulary, which was to be under Imperial control, the excess over £1,000,000 being paid by the Treasury, and a sum of one-fifteenth, subject to possible reductions, of the total cost of the Army, Navy, Civil List, and National Debt. In 1886 the total of these contributions from Ireland was estimated at roughly £4,500,000.

A more intolerable arrangement it would pass the wit of man to devise. Ireland was to have no representation in the Imperial Parliament. Yet that Parliament, in other words, Great Britain, was to fix and collect three-quarters of Ireland's revenue, to have the first call on more than half of that revenue, and to control the police force of the country. Constitutionally, the financial provisions of the scheme were utterly irreconcilable with the wide political powers conferred upon the Irish Legislature and Executive. No Irish Government could have done otherwise than repudiate such a monstrous tyranny—a tyranny for which there is no parallel anywhere in British history. Financially, the scheme would, if carried out, have involved bankruptcy almost from the start. How utterly impossible it would have been to carry on under its provisions any of the work of reconstruction and development which has since taken place under the Union, may be imagined by applying those provisions to present conditions. On last year's Estimates Ireland would, under those provisions, have had to contribute, out of a total collected revenue of £11,700,000, over £7,500,000 towards Imperial expenditure, including Constabulary, leaving barely £4,000,000 with which to conduct an administration which, excluding Constabulary, costs nearly £10,000,000! The scheme offered the Irish Government no prospect of financial stability; it contained no inducement anywhere to economy; but, on the contrary, every inducement to connive at smuggling and illicit distilling. So much for the first attempt to square incompatible policies, to give the administration of Ireland over to Mr. Parnell in return

for his political support, but to keep back both the control and the enjoyment of the greater part of the Irish revenues.

The financial arrangements of the Home Rule Bill of 1893 were largely provisional. An attempt was made to bring the constitutional and financial positions into some sort of correlation by retaining Irish members at Westminster and so affording some justification both for Imperial control of Customs and Excise and for an Irish contribution to Imperial expenditure. That contribution was originally fixed as the proceeds of the Customs, then estimated at £2,500,000. It is a curious reflection on the finance of the Bill of 1886 that even this reduced contribution was discovered to involve too great a strain on the Irish finances, and the provision was altered in Committee into one fixing the contribution to Imperial expenditure as one-third of the Irish "true" revenue, then estimated at £2,276,000. To this was to be added any special war tax that might be imposed in the United Kingdom. These two provisions were liable to be revised after six years. Ireland was also to pay two-thirds of the Constabulary for such period, not exceeding six years, as it remained under Imperial control. Subject to these deductions, and to a first charge on account of expenses incurred in connection with the Land Purchase Act of 1891, the Irish Government was to have the disposal of the "true" Irish revenue. It was calculated that the Irish Exchequer would thus start off with a revenue, for local purposes, of £4,660,000. Here again a comparison with present day figures shows how seriously Ireland would have been crippled by such a scheme. Out of a "true" revenue of £10,000,000, or possibly £10,500,000, Ireland would last year have had at the most some £5,600,000-£6,000,000 available for an administration costing nearly £10,000,000.

Less intolerable than the provisions of the 1886 Bill, the provisions of the 1893 Bill still left endless scope for controversy. Apart from the general capacity of Ireland to pay any contribution to Imperial purposes,

while its social and economic conditions still required so much ameliorative expenditure, the fixing of the "true" revenue would have afforded abundant scope for disagreement, while the South African War would have raised a whole series of difficulties of its own. What proportion, for instance, of the cost should have been covered by borrowing, in which case Ireland would have contributed nothing, and what proportion by special war taxation? And if by special taxes, then for how long were those taxes to be reckoned as war taxes? Again, by what criterion could it have been decided whether an increase in ordinary taxation necessitated by one or two minor wars, such as the campaigns against the Somali Mullah, should be reckoned as a war tax or not?

The Bill of 1912 is, apparently, to follow the 1893 Bill in its main outlines. But the financial situation has meanwhile been completely transformed by the fact that the current administrative expenditure in Ireland now exceeds the whole revenue raised in Ireland by an amount which will soon run to something like £3,000,000. The problem in 1886 and 1893 was to determine Ireland's contribution to Imperial expenditure. The problem in 1912 is to determine the Imperial contribution to Irish local expenditure. By the Bill of 1893 Irish members were kept at Westminster in order to have a voice in the spending of the money contributed by Ireland. By the Bill of 1912 they are, it would appear, to be kept at Westminster in order to have a voice in the spending of money, none of which is contributed by Ireland, though some of it is to be given to Ireland.

According to Mr. Churchill, the Imperial contribution is to take the shape of payment of the Old Age pensions, a matter of £2,800,000, and of the completion of Land Purchase. What this latter item may cost is a purely speculative matter. The current expenses of the Land Commission alone amount to over £400,000 a year. Agreements to the extent of £45,000,000 have been made, but not yet carried out;

another £87,000,000 worth of land remains to be dealt with. The taxpayers of Great Britain are to find £130,000,000 in credit or cash—and under present conditions the proportion of cash will have to be very considerable if agreements are to be effected at all. What effective control will they have over this expenditure? How is the payment of arrears to be enforced? If there is a general agitation against the payment of instalments of “tribute to a foreign Government for the Irish nation’s land,” is the Imperial Government, with the ordinary administration secretly or openly enlisted against it, to evict half the country side? With such a prospect before it, what likelihood is there of the British public showing any undue anxiety to find the money for carrying through the scheme? But if the completion of Land Purchase is hung up indefinitely, will not the procrastination of the British Government afford an excuse for a fresh agrarian agitation to force the Irish Government to deal with the land on its own lines? What those lines might be it is not difficult to imagine: compulsory expropriation, with payment in worthless stock, or special punitive taxation on all estates over a certain size, are among the most obvious devices.

Even more serious, in many respects, are the difficulties likely to arise over the vexed question of the control of Customs and Excise. Judging by Mr. Churchill’s declaration that Irish financial policy must be “consistent with the finance of the United Kingdom,” it is most probable that the rates of Customs and Excise will be fixed by the United Kingdom, though the actual levying of the Excise may possibly be left to the local authorities. With a real federal system, in which the subordinate States carry on their limited functions either entirely on the proceeds of local taxation or with a grant from the Federal Government, such federal control of Customs and Excise is only natural and proper. But in this case the whole of the proceeds of these duties are to be assigned to Irish purposes. This means that the Irish Finance Minister will be

dependent for over three-quarters of his Budget on somebody else's Budget, a Budget framed on considerations which have nothing whatever to do with his own financial needs. Let me take such an obvious eventuality as the adoption by the United Kingdom of a policy of Tariff Reform, which would involve a substantial reduction on the present exorbitant tea and tobacco duties and the substitution of duties on foreign manufactures and foodstuffs. Under the Union such a change would, apart from any protective benefits, be an unmixed advantage to Ireland, which is a large consumer of tea and tobacco, but imports very little from foreign countries, by substantially lightening the burden of her taxation, without, of course, in any way affecting Irish expenditure. But under the system of Home Rule finance, which is apparently to be introduced, the result of such a change would be that the Irish Finance Minister would open his evening paper in Dublin to find that his prospective revenue had been reduced by a million or two, and would be left face to face with the practically impossible task of raising the internal taxation of Ireland by anything from 30 to 60 per cent. at a moment's notice.

Any financial system under which Ireland has to depend for her administrative expenditure upon Customs and Excise duties which are outside her own control is bound to be unworkable. A contract system under which Ireland received, in addition to such internal taxes as she might levy, a fixed aggregate or a fixed sum per head of population, would be less objectionable. But it would still leave the amount of the United Kingdom grant a matter for continual political haggling, and make the Irish Finance Minister look to the activities of the Irish members at Westminster as his chief source of revenue. It would provide no real correspondence between the responsibility for finding money and the responsibility for spending it, which is the key to sound finance. If Ireland is to be the political and financial unit, and Home Rule implies this, then the only sound financial system is one which gives the Irish

Government the complete control of all taxation levied upon the Irish people. And that means a system under which Ireland will be able, and, indeed, will inevitably be compelled, to levy a general tariff and set up a Customs barrier against British trade. It has been suggested that Ireland might be allowed to control her own Customs and Excise, on condition that there is no interference with internal Free Trade in the United Kingdom. The absurdity of the suggestion is almost too patent to require pointing out. For if the Irish tariff were higher than the British, or were imposed on articles not taxed in Great Britain, these articles would all be imported through Great Britain, and there would be no Irish revenue. If the Irish tariff were lower, then the loss of revenue would be on the side of Great Britain. To keep the two tariffs at the same level, on the other hand, implies precisely that United Kingdom control over the main sources of Irish revenue, which has already been shown to be so fundamentally unsound and unworkable.

The fact is that no Home Rule Bill can be financially workable that is not based on a definite political principle. The finance of Union is perfectly straightforward and simple. So, in a sense, is the finance of complete separation, the finance of "cutting the loss" as far as Great Britain is concerned, and leaving Ireland to sink or swim on her own resources. Even a federal system of finance might be made to work, though not easily, if it were set up as a whole, and if the functions of the subordinate units were kept within moderate limits. But the Nationalists are not prepared to accept those limits; the Government are not, as yet, it would seem, prepared to face the prospect of an Irish tariff against British goods, even if the Nationalists were prepared to shoulder the whole burden of Irish expenditure; each party to the log-rolling compact is, in fact, determined to retain the whole of his cake as well as to eat it. Upon such an incoherent political foundation no stable financial superstructure can be erected. There can only be endless friction, confusion, and

waste, till the tangle is straightened out either by complete financial and political separation, or by the abandonment of the whole ill-fated experiment, and the restoration of the Union in its political and financial integrity.

XIV.—ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SEPARATISM.

IN discussing the economic and social consequences of Home Rule, I shall begin with two assumptions. The first is that Home Rule, in whatever form it may be passed in the House of Commons, by whatever paper safeguards it may be hedged in, will mean in practice, at any rate after a very short time, complete political and financial separation. My second assumption is that the fiscal policy known as Free Trade is on its last legs, and that, in the course of the next two or three years, the British Isles, whether united or divided, will revert to a policy of national protection and national development. The reasons which justify the former assumption have, I trust, been made sufficiently clear in the preceding articles. The latter assumption is, I fancy, an obvious commonplace of the general political situation. But it is a commonplace whose immense significance in relation to the Home Rule problem is, as a rule, overlooked.

Whatever might have been said in 1886 or 1893 as to the disadvantages of Home Rule, it was not possible to urge that it would, of itself, as apart from any question of good government, inflict direct economic injury upon Ireland. On the contrary, Ireland, after the preliminary stage of getting rid of the restrictions imposed in the Home Rule Bill, would have been in a position to sweep away a burdensome system of taxation, substitute one more suited to her needs, give such protection as she found desirable to her own agriculture and industries, and still continue to enjoy exactly the same position in the British market as before. The policy of free imports, in fact, as long as it exists, is

not only no help in cementing national unity, but offers an actual premium on separation. With a policy of national protection and national development in prospect the situation is at once entirely transformed. Such a policy aims consciously and consistently at giving an advantage or preference to the citizens of the political and economic unit in which it is applied over those who stand outside the unit. If the unit in question is the United Kingdom, then a national policy will look to the greatest development of the prosperity of the United Kingdom as a whole, including Ireland, and will give Irish goods an advantage in the British market not only over foreign goods, but also over goods from other parts of the Empire. If Great Britain and Ireland are separate political and fiscal units, then each will look after itself, and in the process Ireland, with her small home market, with her undeveloped industries, with her lack of capital, and with her almost complete economic dependence on the British market, is bound to be the loser.

I have already shown, in the second of these articles, how Ireland's industrial development was crippled and repressed by England in the Eighteenth Century, not from any deliberate malice on England's part, but simply because Ireland was a separate fiscal and political unit, and because British industries were represented in the Parliament which controlled the trade policy of the Empire, while Irish industries were unrepresented. Home Rule in the Twentieth Century would involve for Ireland precisely the same consequences as it did in the Eighteenth Century. It is true that the British Government would no longer dream of interfering with Irish trade at the source by directly forbidding certain kinds of Irish exports. On the other hand, Ireland is far more dependent upon the British market to-day than she was then, while the power of modern organised capital to promote development in one area or in one direction, rather than in another, is infinitely greater. And British capital,

under the policy of separation, would certainly not tend to be directed into Irish channels or to devote itself to the development of Ireland.

Taking the most favourable hypothesis to begin with, let us assume that Home Rule has been inaugurated by mutual agreement, or, at any rate, with general acquiescence, and that the grant of Home Rule has completely reconciled Irish nationalism to the Imperial connection. We may then reasonably suppose that, in framing its fiscal system, the Irish Government will be ready to grant a substantial preference to British trade over foreign trade. In that case there can be no doubt that Great Britain would respond, and would give to Irish products the same preference as might be extended to Canadian or Australian products. But the first duty of the British Government would still be to British producers. While Empire-grown wheat, and possibly meat, would come in free, the British farmer would, in all probability, receive a measure of protection against the rest of the Empire in dairy products and poultry, in barley, oats, hops, tobacco, sugar beet, vegetables, and fruit, in all those crops, in fact, which would give the maximum of employment on the land, and in which the British production could meet the British demand without an undue effect upon prices. Now, it is precisely by these intensive forms of production that Ireland stands to gain most under Union. Under Home Rule she would lose this advantage, and have to compete on an equality with the rest of the Empire, both in respect to these products and in respect to wheat and meat. Even her exclusive privileges with regard to store cattle could hardly be expected to survive the establishment of Home Rule. They could no longer be defended, as against Canada, by the arguments now used, and as a piece of pure protectionism there would be no reason for Great Britain to give them to a separate fiscal entity. And if the hopes of Irish agriculture would be severely checked, still more would that be true of those hopes of new industries, which I referred to in an earlier article. Even the great linen

industry might find a small duty enough to transfer a large part of its production within the British tariff zone. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether any tariff that Ireland could impose, consistently either with preference or with reasonable prices, in so small a market, and on so small a scale of production, could be of much effect against the competition of British industries, strengthened and made aggressive under the stimulus of a national trade policy.

But can we assume the favourable hypothesis just discussed as the most probable one? Will the Nationalist movement be reconciled by its success, first, in securing a Home Rule Bill, and then in getting rid of all its hampering restrictions, or will it only be encouraged to a still more vigorous exhibition of that spirit of hostility to Great Britain which it has displayed hitherto? Enlightened self-interest would undoubtedly recommend a policy of economic friendliness towards Great Britain. But then enlightened self-interest would have commended many things to the Nationalist Party which it has spurned or endeavoured to thwart. And, if it may be said that hitherto economic advantages have been looked at askance as likely to weaken the demand for Home Rule, is it not conceivable that they may be rejected when an alternative policy may seem to offer better opportunities for helping on "the march of the nation"? There is nothing inherently absurd in imagining the Nationalist Party when in power rejecting the policy of Imperial preference, and endeavouring to establish special economic relations with the United States or with Germany. As a large exporter of manufactures, Germany is certain to be seriously affected by the establishment of a British tariff. As a considerable importer of foodstuffs, she could also afford to give Ireland some concessions in return for a position of preference, or at least equality, in the Irish market. Incidentally, the large increase of German merchant shipping in Irish harbours involved by such an agreement would be of no little service to Germany in the

eventuality of war, in providing potential commerce destroyers with a very reasonable excuse for being in the most favourable area for their contemplated operations.

Any such fiscal vagaries would inevitably create resentment and suspicion in Great Britain, and lead to tariff reprisals from which Ireland would receive permanent injury far out-weighting any temporary advantages which any foreign country could offer. In other words, Ireland under Home Rule would in almost every respect be thrust back into her Eighteenth Century position of "least-favoured Colony." She would, at the best, be handicapped in the British market in respect of those products by which she could profit most, while in those which she is less fitted to produce she would have to compete with the virgin soil and competitive energy and organisation of the great Dominions. At the worst, her fiscal policy might invite reprisals and make her "least-favoured," not only by her circumstances, but by the deliberate intention of those who would frame the British tariff.

But the use of the Customs tariff, as I have shown in a former article, is by no means the only great instrument of national economic policy. The development of internal communications, the removal of internal barriers to economic intercourse, is an essential complement to a national fiscal policy. In the case of Ireland it is, indeed, the more important half of national economic policy. A system of train ferries creating direct railway communication between the Irish farmer and his market in England, bringing the beauties of Irish scenery within convenient reach of English tourists, and making the west coast of Ireland the true west coast of the United Kingdom for all the fast mail and passenger traffic across the Atlantic, would completely revolutionise Irish economic conditions. But such a system implies the existence of a single Government interested in the development of the United Kingdom as a whole, and the absence of internal tariff barriers; in other words, the Union. A traffic

between England and Ireland, for which it would well repay a private company to establish train ferries, on the assumption of a trade stimulated by the operation of a common United Kingdom tariff, would not be worth the expenditure and risk if that traffic were restricted and impeded by fiscal separatism. On the other hand, if it comes to a question of subsidies to enable such schemes to be started, a United Kingdom Government under the Union has an interest and an inducement in granting such subsidies which separate Governments in Great Britain and Ireland would not have. Under fiscal separatism Irish manufacturers and British farmers alike might protest against being taxed to facilitate the competition of rivals in their own markets.

As for the Transatlantic service, an Irish Government would neither have sufficient money nor sufficient interest to give the high subsidies necessary to secure a 25 or 26 knot service. A British Government would naturally develop one of its existing ports, or some new port on the west coast of Scotland, rather than build up a new source of revenue and national strength in a separate State. No one could blame it, any more than we would blame the Canadian Government for wishing to subsidise a fast service from Halifax or some other port in the Dominion rather than one from St. Johns, Newfoundland. In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries the Navigation Acts deliberately destroyed Irish shipping. A policy of *laissez faire* in matters of national communications has hitherto prevented its revival. To-day new ideas are in the air. Those ideas can be applied, either from the standpoint of the Union or from that of separatism. In the one case Ireland has the prospect of utilising, for the first time in her history, her geographical position as the eastern bridgehead of the North Atlantic. In the other, the immense power of the larger capital and larger subsidies of Great Britain will be as effective as any Navigation Laws of the past in leaving Ireland in her

blind alley, a discontented derelict by the wayside of the world's traffic.

And if the theory of *laissez faire* is soon to receive its final quietus in matters of trade and communications, it has already been largely superseded in regard to social questions. The duty of the State to expend money in order to level up the standard of life of its citizens, or to prevent their sinking below that standard, is to-day universally recognised. The methods by which that object is aimed at are various. There is the crudest form, that of direct money relief, such as is involved in Old Age Pensions. There is the subsidising of socially desirable economic operations, such as insurance against sickness, or the acquisition of freehold by tenants. There is the expenditure of money on various forms of education, in the scientific assistance of industry and agriculture, in the promotion of forestry, drainage, or the improvement of local communications. There is the enforcement of innumerable regulations to safeguard the health and safety of the working population.

Nowhere has this conception of the duty of the State exercised a greater influence than in Ireland during the last twenty years. The Congested Districts Board, the Department of Agriculture, the Land Purchase scheme illustrate one phase of its carrying into effect. Old Age Pensions, cheap labourers' cottages, sickness insurance illustrate another. All these have been provided out of the United Kingdom Exchequer. I have shown that on the most favourable assumption it is doubtful whether a financially independent Ireland could provide for the whole of its current expenditure in those directions. What is quite certain is that Irish revenues, unaided, could not provide for a continuous extension of this policy in order to keep Ireland on a level with English conditions. It has been stated by Mr. Churchill that under the Government scheme of Home Rule, Land Purchase and Old Age Pensions will be paid by Great Britain. Even if that were a workable arrangement it only covers a small

part of the field. For the rest, Home Rule would mean the complete abandonment of the attempt to level up the social conditions of Great Britain and Ireland to a common standard. The Irish Government would never have the means to carry out the same programme of social legislation as will be carried out in Great Britain. Handicapped in competition with British industries it would, moreover, naturally be disinclined, even apart from the question of cost, to apply any legislation or any regulations which might tend to raise the immediate cost of production. There will thus not only be an inevitable falling back for want of means, but, in addition, a continual temptation to the weaker and more backward State to meet superior industrial social conditions. But such a policy would not only be disastrous in itself in its ultimate effect upon Irish national life. It would at once provide a fresh and valid excuse for effective fiscal differentiation against Ireland in Great Britain. Once again as in the Eighteenth Century Ireland would be penalised for being a poor and "sweated" country.

So far we have only considered the economic results of separatism as they would affect Ireland. Ireland would undoubtedly be the chief sufferer. Her dependence on the English market, the smallness of her home market, her backward social conditions, her lack of capital, would all be insuperable obstacles to a really healthy development on independent lines. Great Britain, on the other hand, would suffer relatively much less from Home Rule. The immediate shrinkage of trade with Ireland, even with an Irish tariff to overcome, might not be very great. The real loss would be not so much the actual decrease of trade, though that might be appreciable, as the loss of the opportunities which would be afforded by Irish development under the Union. As the trade to Ireland is worth £50,000,000 a year already, and might well be raised to £100,000,000 or more, the opportunity is not one lightly to be thrown away.

The essence of the situation after all is that the United Kingdom is a single economic area. The exclusion of one part of that area from the political and economic life of the rest, while injurious to the rest, has in the past proved disastrous above all to the part excluded. After centuries of alternate neglect and repression, Ireland has at last been brought to a condition in which she is capable of taking the fullest advantage of a new era of progress and development for the United Kingdom as a whole. And this is the time which is chosen for seriously suggesting that she should be once again excluded from all the benefits of partnership in the United Kingdom, and driven out into the old wilderness of discontent and stagnation.

XV.—IRELAND UNDER THE NATIONALISTS.

Up to this point I have stated the case for the maintenance of the Union on the broad ground of common advantage, and, more particularly, of its advantage to Ireland. The arguments I have used have been arguments based on the permanent facts of geography and economics, and have not depended upon any consideration of the kind of Government that would be set up in Ireland under Home Rule. What I have endeavoured to make clear is that, whoever might control the Government of Ireland, and however efficiently they might perform their duties, Home Rule would be bad for the United Kingdom as a whole, and worse for Ireland. Herein, to my mind, lies the overwhelming strength of the Unionist case. It is a case that does not rest upon religious prejudice, upon the interests of a class, or even upon the most justifiable presumption as to the character and methods of the system of Government which is likely to be set up in Ireland under Home Rule. It rests upon a law of enduring validity in the world of nations, the law that union means strength and disunion weakness.

At the same time, it is impossible to leave out altogether any question as to the immediate consequences of Home Rule upon the internal administration of Ireland. Who are the men who will govern Ireland if Home Rule be established? What is their political record in the past? What probability is there of their being capable of maintaining law and order, of safeguarding individual liberty, of protecting political or religious minorities in the full and equal exercise of their rights? What reasonable assurance can we have that they will attempt to co-operate harmoniously with the British Government in so far as Home Rule will permit of such co-operation? These are questions which even if answered satisfactorily do not in the least weaken the essential case for the Union. But if the answer is unsatisfactory then it can only strengthen and intensify the determination of Unionists to resist at all costs a policy which not only spells weakness and poverty to Ireland, but the triumph of lawlessness, injustice, and hatred of England.

Home Rule means the government of Ireland by the Nationalist Party, and by its subordinate organisations, the United Irish League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. There is an amiable theory, professed by most English Liberals and by many Irish Home Rulers, to the effect that the Nationalist Party is simply a temporary product of the national demand for Home Rule, and that, upon the satisfaction of that demand, it will promptly disappear, making way for a division of parties upon lines of cleavage over economic or educational questions. That theory assumes, to begin with, that the Home Rule Bill will contain all that Irish Nationalism demands. If it does not, if its provisions do not leave Ireland as completely independent of all practical control by the British Parliament as any of the great Dominions, then even those who put forward this theory must admit that the Nationalist Party will still have an effective plea for retaining its position and power. But, apart from the specific character of the

measure of Home Rule carried out, the theory is based on a misconception of the character of the Nationalist Party, and entirely neglects the importance and permanence of the "machine" as a factor in politics.

The Nationalist party is in no sense the outcome of a spontaneous and whole-hearted desire of the Irish people, outside of Ulster, for political separation. As Lalor ruefully admitted, there never was such a desire. Nationalism, as such, has been the creed, and no doubt the sincere creed, of a few, a creed whose origin can be traced in part to the pseudo-nationalism of the old Ascendency Parliament, in part to the revolutionary movement in America and France, revived again in the stormy days of 1848. The Nationalist Party is a political machine created by a handful of determined Nationalists out of the agrarian trouble of the 'Seventies. The agrarian trouble has in large measure disappeared. But the machine survives. Among a population where individual initiative and independence are still sorely lacking it exercises an almost despotic power. The foundations of that power have been seriously weakened by the Unionist policy of reconstruction, and with the completion of that policy, with the building up of a prosperous, contented, business-like, and independent community, the Nationalist Party will either be compelled to revise its whole attitude and organisation or to lose its power. On the other hand, the establishment of Home Rule implies not only the establishment but, what is still more important, the endowment of the Nationalist Party machine. That machine will have in its hands the whole control of the administration, the granting of all appointments, the distribution of money in the shape of public works or in the assistance of the Congested Districts Board or of other departments. From such a position it can only be dislodged by a tremendous upheaval of independent public spirit, and it is likely to be a far cry to such an upheaval in Ireland.

Granting, then, that the Nationalist Party will rule in Ireland, if Home Rule is established, how will it

rule? The answer is to be found in the past record and present composition of that party. There is no reason to impugn the patriotism or sincerity, however mistaken we may think it, of those who created the party or who lead it to-day. But it is equally impossible to close our eyes to certain obvious facts. From first to last the Nationalist Party has preached hatred of England and of the British Empire. Even if at times a more reasonable spirit is shown in the utterances of its more responsible leaders, it is almost always under conditions which throw grave doubt on the sincerity of those utterances. Those utterances are not made to Nationalist audiences either in Ireland or in the United States. To such audiences the suggestion is always that what the Nationalist Party is officially striving after is only an instalment of a more ambitious policy, and that the tone of moderation does not preclude a whole-hearted sympathy with extremists. After all it is those same extremists, men like Patrick Ford, who openly justify murder and dynamite, who throughout have largely helped to finance the movement, and whom it has always been necessary to reassure as to the genuineness, from their point of view, of the Parliamentary campaign.

Again, from first to last the Nationalist Party has been associated with lawlessness and agrarian crime in Ireland. The finding of the Parnell Commission, which cleared Mr. Parnell of one particularly odious charge, based on a forgery, was an overwhelming condemnation of the methods of the Nationalist Party as a whole. Ireland is quieter to-day. But it is impossible to say that in the restoration of comparative tranquillity and respect for law and order the Nationalist members or the organisers of the United Irish League have played any but an obstructive part. However sincerely individual members may disapprove in private of illegal violence and intimidation, the Nationalist Party as a whole is doubly hampered in taking any steps that would clearly mark or make effective its public disapproval,

For one thing, it is committed to the theory that every form of lawlessness and disorder is simply the result of British government, and consequently useful as an argument for Home Rule. For another, its own most vigorous local supporters are so often connected with the fomenting of lawless disturbances that public and effective disavowal might prove a matter of some difficulty.

If lawlessness, crime, and intimidation in Ireland were really of a political character and solely directed against the British authorities it is conceivable that they might disappear with the establishment of a National Government. But they are not. They are not even in many cases a manifestation of peasant discontent against a landlord caste. Their victims are not, as a rule, Englishmen or even Protestants or Unionists. They are just those who for one reason or another have incurred the displeasure of the local petty tyrants of the United Irish League, or who possess or farm some land that their neighbours happen to covet. The issue is, in fact, simply one of lawlessness and nothing more. What reason is there to suppose that the advent to power of those who have connived at lawlessness, who depend for power upon the most active promoters of lawlessness, will really lead to effectiveness in its repression? Or why should any change in the nature of the Government in Dublin affect the conduct of villagers who consider organised intimidation the cheapest and most effective way of securing possession of some particular farm? Under the Union the completion of land purchase and the firm maintenance of law and order will gradually and perhaps even speedily put an end to an evil which has afflicted Ireland for centuries. Home Rule will simply be the signal for a renewal of lawlessness, in which those who have already purchased their land will be the first to suffer, and in which any hope of a real agrarian settlement will disappear.

But if Home Rule means an increase of lawlessness, it inevitably means that in that lawlessness all the

advantage will lie with those who have been or will be the active supporters of the dominant faction. The "spoils to the victors" is a phrase that will have an even wider signification than it has in America. The theory that the partisans of the old régime will suddenly find themselves treated in an entirely new fashion because Home Rule has been achieved, that they will not only enjoy the same protection from the law that they now enjoy but will also be freely elected to County Councils and to the Irish Parliament on their individual merits, is a theory which is not supported either by inherent probability or by any inference from what has happened under similar conditions elsewhere. It was not upon that theory that the successful American revolutionaries acted after 1783. There, in spite of every solemn pledge, life was made so intolerable for the loyalists that the great majority were driven to seek refuge in what were then the forest wildernesses of Ontario and Nova Scotia. It was not upon that theory that the successful Boer revolutionaries acted after Home Rule was given to the Transvaal in 1881. It is not upon that theory that the Boer majority in the Orange River Colony acted after the establishment of self-government five years ago. There are no constitutional safeguards that can protect the Unionists in Ireland. The only safeguard of their rights and liberties is the Union. Their only hope is that the success of the Union in bringing prosperity, contentment, and peace to Ireland will justify them to the people and give them once more that opportunity for public service from which they are debarred to-day.

Even more absurd than the notion that Home Rule will bring about a sudden cessation of lawlessness or a transformation of the whole field of politics is the idea that there will be a sudden transformation in the field of religion, and that the age-long feud of Catholic and Protestant will give place to a new division, in which Clericalism and anti-Clericalism will be closely balanced, and in which the victory will speedily be

achieved by the latter. Here, again, we have a theory which ignores the permanence of organisations and of conflicts. If there were no Protestants at all in Ireland, or, at any rate, only an insignificant minority, such a division might come in course of time, though the example of Quebec does not suggest that it would come rapidly. But with a Protestant element as strong as it is in Ireland, with the old feud wakened into fresh intensity by the inevitable struggle between Ulster and the Nationalists which would follow on the establishment of Home Rule, with the purely denominational character of the Hibernian Order, which is acquiring ever increasing power within the Nationalist Party, and with the natural efforts that the Roman Catholic Church would make to identify itself with the Nationalist Party, once Home Rule were established, it is almost impossible to believe that there will be any serious alteration in the religious environment, at least not for a generation to come. And, if so, then it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the fears of the Protestants will be justified, at any rate, to this extent, that clerical influence will increase at the outset, even if it may be narrowed again eventually, and that the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, educational or otherwise, will receive a consideration which will not be extended to the Protestant denominations.

Lastly, is it possible to ignore altogether in our calculations the past attitude of the Nationalist Party towards the British Empire and to assume a sudden reconciliation brought about by Home Rule? It was the danger of Home Rule from the point of view of national safety that forced the necessity of Union home upon Pitt. Is it impossible that we may again, and perhaps in not too distant a future, be face to face with another struggle as desperate as that which Pitt had to wage against Revolutionary France? But, if so, then the presence of an unfriendly Government in Ireland cannot but be a dangerous source of weakness. It could ostentatiously show its goodwill to our adver-

saries. It could paralyse our credit by destroying the operation of Land Purchase. It could interfere with the recruiting of fresh troops in Ireland, or make it dangerous to withdraw such troops as were already in the country. In a score of ways it could hamper and retard the action of our forces in a great crisis. Ireland may not, relatively, be a factor of such importance as it was a century ago. But its geographical position must always affect our strategy, and in a struggle for life and death even a minor factor may play a decisive part.

XVI.—THE POSITION OF ULSTER.

UP to this point I have purposely refrained, as far as possible, from dealing with the position of Ulster in relation to the Home Rule issue. In one article only, that in which I dealt with the claim of the Nationalists that Ireland is a "nation," I was perforce obliged to refer to the fact that, if the word "nation" can be applied at all, Ireland to-day is not one nation, but two nations, and that, of the two nations, the one which is the weaker in numbers, but the stronger in every other factor that makes for national success, is unalterably opposed to Home Rule. That unalterable opposition makes Home Rule an impossible thing to carry through, except by sheer overwhelming military force, which no Irish Government could apply, and which no British Government would dare to apply. But to understand that opposition, to appreciate the essential justification which underlies a mode of expression which often seems exaggerated to those who are accustomed to the more conventional methods of British politics, it is necessary to have in mind the whole strength of the case against Home Rule. And it is for this reason that I have kept back all discussion of the attitude and purpose of Ulster to the end.

It is essential to bear in mind that the term "Ulster" in this connection is not identical with the geographical

definition of the old historic province. Ulster, for the purpose of this discussion, is not a geographical area, but a people. To take the geographical area of that name and ask how many Nationalist and how many Unionist members it returns to Parliament, or how many "voters" each "party" musters in that area, merely obscures the issue. "Ulster" means a million persons differing in origin, in religion, in character, and habits, and, above all, in political outlook, from "Ireland," in the sense in which the Nationalists use the latter word. In two counties—Antrim and Down—the Ulstermen compose practically the whole of the population. In the rest of the province they are interspersed in varying proportions with the "Irish" or Nationalist element. But, whether a majority or a minority, they remain a distinct and separate people, and not merely a party. And they remain a dominant people, not in the sense that they possess any political or religious privilege, or that they desire any privilege, but that they have a force of character and a power of action that is not possessed in the same degree by their neighbours. A county that contains 55 per cent. of Nationalist voters is, by our ordinary political conventions, a Nationalist county. But it remains an Ulster county for all that, and the Ulstermen intend that it shall remain so.

The original Ulster settlement in James I.'s time differed from other settlements, notably from Cromwell's settlement, in that the settlers came over in compact bodies, whole Scotch villages together, and so have never tended to become merged in the native Irish population. The intensity of their loyalty to the British connection and to the Protestant cause was ill requited by their oppression by the narrow Church of Ireland oligarchy in Dublin during the Eighteenth Century, and by the restrictions which the British Parliament imposed upon their industries. It was their discontent, embodied in the Ulster Volunteers, that wrung Irish Parliamentary independence from

the British Government in 1782, and, in spite of the religious feelings roused by the rebellion of 1798, they were still in the main strongly opposed to the Union in 1800.

That they have since then reverted to their earliest traditions and become the strongest supporters of the Union is due to two causes: Firstly, to the fact that since Catholic Emancipation they have realised that any form of Home Rule would leave them in a hopeless religious minority; secondly, to the prosperity which they have achieved under the Union, and to the justifiable fear they entertain of losing that prosperity if the security of British administration were removed. Confronted with the same agrarian problem as their Catholic fellow-countrymen, they managed at a much earlier date to find a solution of that problem in the custom of tenant right, and, thanks to that and to their own energy and determination, they managed to hold their own under economic conditions which brought about the complete breakdown of rural life over the rest of Ireland. Face to face with unfettered English competition in industry, and driven out of the woollen and cotton trade, they concentrated upon their linen industry, which they have made the greatest in the world. More remarkable still, they have, in defiance of nature, in the absence of every necessary raw material, and even of a natural harbour, made Belfast one of the world's greatest shipbuilding centres. For an Ulsterman it is enough to take a stranger over one of the immense leviathans in the Belfast docks, with several thousand men busy at work upon her, and from the lofty height of her deck show him the whole of the mighty industry which sheer stubborn enterprise has created there, to explain why he holds it inconceivable that the men of Belfast should be governed by the petty agitators of the United Irish League. And inconceivable it is for that matter. The Nationalists have no better moral claim to govern or tax Belfast than to govern or tax Birmingham.

But the loyalty of Ulster to the Union is something very much more than either fear of religious oppression or fear of industrial injury. It is a real sentiment of devotion to the idea of Union, a pride in the greatness of British Imperial citizenship, a loyalty to the flag, which are all the more intense because they have to be maintained in the face of the constant display of a very different sentiment on the part of the Nationalists. Combined with a keen consciousness of material danger and a vivid apprehension of religious oppression, and combined in men of strong and simple character, the sentiment of Unionist patriotism which animates Ulster is something very different from the "forced and factitious" Nationalism which returns members to Parliament from the rest of Ireland. The strength of Nationalism is in the votes it can muster in the Lobby of the House of Commons; the strength of Ulster lies in its moral force. Nationalism is organised for petty rural tyranny and for the control of elections; the Unionism of Ulster is organised for action. It is organised not by professional politicians and agitators—the politician is a comparatively small factor in the situation—but by the natural leaders of a people that means business, the leaders of its daily life in industry and commerce.

The sum and substance of Ulster's views and arguments are contained in the one historic phrase: "We will not have Home Rule." The very baldness and simplicity of the words only bring out more strikingly the sheer will power that stands behind them. It is that will power which is the most solid and real factor in politics at this moment; it is upon that rock that the policy of Home Rule must inevitably split. Ulster is not going to have Home Rule; that is to say, it does not intend to be governed by the Nationalists. And to prevent that it is prepared, in the words of the solemn resolution of the Ulster Convention of 1892, to "resort to any means that may be found necessary to preserve unimpaired our equal citizenship in the United King-

dom." That was its attitude in 1886, when Lord Randolph Churchill declared that "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right; Ulster will fight, and Ulster will win." That was its attitude in 1893, when the Ulster Clubs were busy arming and drilling in order to be able to resist any attempt of the Dublin Parliament to exercise any authority over Ulster. That is its attitude to-day. But there is this important difference. In 1886 and 1893 Ulster knew it had the safeguard of the House of Lords and of a second appeal to the electorate between it and the passing into law of a Home Rule Act. This time that safeguard has been deliberately removed by the Parliament Act. And, consequently, Ulster is this time making preparations for the eventuality of resistance both with greater seriousness than before and with an even stronger belief in the duty of resisting a measure which it will now regard not only as disastrous, but devoid of any real constitutional sanction.

The fact that Ulster does not mean to accept Home Rule has got to be recognised, and the sooner it is recognised the better for all concerned. It is no use blinking the fact that every arrangement is being made, in the eventuality of a Home Rule Bill becoming law under the operation of the Parliament Act, for the effective carrying on of a provisional administration which shall hold Ulster for the Union till such time as the British people may regain control of its government and repeal Home Rule. But the very existence of such a Provisional Government in Ulster would make Home Rule in the rest of Ireland impossible. It would not only reduce the Nationalist Government to an absurdity, but it would deprive it of the chief source of its revenues. In Customs alone Ulster contributes over two-thirds of the whole revenue of Ireland. To attempt to coerce Ulster would bring the Nationalist Government face to face with immediate bankruptcy. For the Imperial Government to employ Imperial troops for such a

purpose would, as Lord Wolseley declared in 1893, destroy the British Army. But any attempt at such coercion is frankly impossible; no British Government could live a week that attempted it. If the Unionist and Nationalist populations of Ireland were separated by any clearly-defined boundary, it is possible to imagine a peaceful deadlock lasting for some time, and leading up to an attempt to find some way out of the difficulty. But the very fact that in all the counties of Ulster, outside Antrim and Down, the two populations are mixed, means a desperate struggle at the very outset between the two parties for the possession of debatable areas. In other words, the passage into law of Home Rule, or the mere anticipation of it, means the certainty of civil war over the greater part of Ulster. What civil war implies, what horrors it involves, it is unnecessary for me to attempt to describe. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain, that every hope of progress towards a common prosperity and a common national feeling in Ireland will have been killed for generations.

XVII.—CONCLUSION.

I THINK I can now claim to have stated the whole case against Home Rule in its broad outlines. Beyond those broad outlines I have not attempted to go. It would have been easy to multiply instances of Nationalist hostility to England, of Nationalist methods of intimidation, of all the lawlessness, persecution, and jobbery which flourish under the ægis of the United Irish League, of the lack of moral independence, and the economic and political backwardness of the peasantry of Nationalist Ireland. These matters cannot be ignored. But they are not the essence of the case against Home Rule, and my object has been to state that case, and not to frame an indictment against the Nationalist Party, still less against the Irish

people over whom it exercises its political control. My endeavour throughout has been to found my argument on reason and not on prejudice. As Unionists, it should be part of our creed, not, indeed, to shut our eyes to facts, but to believe and hope the best of every section of those whom we hold to be our fellow countrymen. On the same principle our opposition, as true Unionists, to Home Rule, should be based, not upon any injury Home Rule may inflict upon Great Britain, but upon the injury it will inflict upon the Union as a whole, and upon Ireland in particular. In that respect, too, I trust I have kept throughout on the good ground of Ireland's interest in the Union, and of the common safety and welfare, and avoided the treacherous ground of an appeal to British selfishness or British pride, an appeal which would, of itself, justify Irish separatism, and which would meet with little response from a public whose strongest motive, I believe, is an honest desire to do what is best for Ireland.

Let me briefly summarise the case as it has been developed in these articles. I began by showing how every evil which Ireland inherited as a legacy from the religious and political conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was aggravated and stereotyped by Home Rule in the eighteenth. It is to Home Rule, and not to the Union, that Ireland owes her social and religious divisions, her agrarian problem, the crippling of her industrial development, the economic and moral degradation of the Penal Laws. The Union alone could heal these wounds. But the task of healing was thrown back again and again: by the stress and strain of an endless war, by the breach of faith over Catholic emancipation, by the disaster of the Famine, and by the stupendous folly of Cobdenism, legislative and fiscal, culminating in the agrarian and political crisis of 1879. In face of that crisis, embodied in the dominating personality of Parnell, Mr. Gladstone, anxious for office and despairing of any remedy for the Irish difficulty, was prepared to undo the Union and make over Ireland to Parnell and to the Land League. From

that unspeakable calamity Ireland was fortunately saved by the revolt of Mr. Gladstone's own followers. During the next twenty years the Unionist Party, under the example and guidance of Mr. Balfour, quietly set to work to solve the agrarian problem by State-aided land purchase, and to build up in various ways a sound foundation for the economic life of the country. Their policy has left Ireland more prosperous, more contented, less deeply divided than at any past time in her history, and on the fair way to far greater material prosperity and to the gradual growth of a true national life, based not on hatred and exclusiveness, but on sympathy, understanding, and a common pride of Irishmen of all creeds and all classes in the welfare of their country.

It is at this stage that we are asked to reverse the whole movement of national progress and national unity, and to go back to the policy of separatism that has already inflicted such untold harm upon Ireland in the past. What are the arguments to warrant such a defiance of the lessons of the past, such a departure from the traditions of every healthy and vigorous nation? The Nationalist argument, that Ireland is a separate nation, and as such demands a separate government, is at least intelligible. But it flies in the face of all the facts of geography, of history, and of economics, which have made the United Kingdom a single national community. And it is met by the reply, unanswerable in logic as in stubborn fact, that if Irish Nationalism constitutes a nation, then Ulster is a nation too. Every argument that can justify the Nationalist claim for separation from Great Britain is an equal justification for Ulster's right to be separated from the rest of Ireland. Every argument that can justify three million Nationalists asserting their national idea over a million Unionists is a tenfold stronger argument for the maintenance of the Union against an insignificant fraction of Irish Nationalists.

The "Colonial" argument, that Home Rule would be simply the carrying out of a policy justified by the success of Colonial self-government elsewhere, is futile,

because it fails to recognise the complete difference in geographical and economic conditions, because it confuses free institutions with separatism, and attributes to the latter a success in which the former was the real determining factor, and because it wilfully ignores the continuous trend of Colonial development towards political union wherever geographical conditions have made such union possible. The federal argument, apart from any question of the applicability of any form or modification of a federal constitution to our conditions, is a mere blind, because the Home Rule scheme now about to be introduced cannot by any possibility lead to the establishment of a federal system in the United Kingdom. The meaner arguments, which suggest that Home Rule will enable Great Britain to "cut her losses" over the administration of Ireland, or that it will free Parliament from a tiresome problem, are as untrue in their assumptions as they are discreditable in their motive. Home Rule will mean more cost to the British taxpayer, and cost without control or hope of return; it will mean more, and not less, discussion of Irish affairs, and unless it involves the exclusion of the Irish members, it will only aggravate the difficulties created by their political tactics, difficulties for which the remedy is not Home Rule, but constitutional reforms which will render log-rolling inoperative. There remains the last argument of all, meanest, but most convincing to those who are responsible for the proposal—the argument that the support of the Nationalist vote in Parliament is essential to the continuance in office of the present Government. But is that continuance in office essential to the nation? It is for the nation to decide.

But what are the consequences which are to be expected from Home Rule? What Ireland needs most at this moment is the completion of the great undertaking of land purchase, the development of the work of the Agricultural Department, the improvement of primary and secondary education, the reform of the Poor Law. All these reforms involve increased expendi-

ture. Under the Union that expenditure can be provided, for under the Union Ireland's poverty is made good out of England's wealth. Under Home Rule Ireland could only with the utmost difficulty maintain her existing expenditure, and could never deal with her growing needs. The Union means in the near future a revision of our system of taxation, which will diminish the burden of taxation upon Ireland and adjust it more closely to the taxable capacity of its people. Home Rule, in place of relief, is bound, merely in order to avoid bankruptcy, to impose a large additional burden.

With the final reversal of Cobdenism, which will accompany that fiscal revision, the alternative between Union and separation will acquire yet a new significance. Under the Union the common tariff of the United Kingdom and the market of the United Kingdom will be devoted to building up Ireland's agriculture and Ireland's industries, to the creation of a prosperity such as has never even been dreamt of in Ireland's troubled history. Under Home Rule Ireland will inevitably, in large measure, be handicapped by the British tariff in the British market, and fall back into that position of "least-favoured Colony" which she endured before the Union. Under the Union a national fiscal policy can be complemented by a national effort to bridge the Irish Sea by a system of train ferries, and thus not only to promote Ireland's internal development, but to give effect to her unique geographical advantage for the fast trans-Atlantic service. Under Home Rule there would be neither political nor economic inducements sufficient to bring about such a result.

Lastly, with the development of Ireland's prosperity, with a renewed increase of population, with the forgetting of old grievances and the awakening of new hopes and new interests, the Union will bring the healing of old differences and the gradual growth of a true Irish patriotism, embracing all creeds and classes, adopting the best in every tradition of Ireland's past,

and determined to make the best, in the future, of Ireland's resources, not only in natural wealth, but still more in the character and natural genius of her people. Home Rule will drown that hope for generations in the bitter memories of civil war between Protestant Ulster and the Catholic South.

It is inconceivable that so foolish, so criminal a policy should commend itself to the people of the United Kingdom. And, for that matter, they have twice rejected it before, and rejected it at a time when the arguments in its favour seemed much more plausible than they do to-day. But what would be even more inconceivable, were it not a fact, is that a Government should be prepared to carry out this policy as a mere incident in a Parliamentary intrigue, and to carry it out with an absolute and contemptuous indifference to the approval or disapproval of the nation. To say that the proposed measure was before the people at the last election because the Prime Minister made two or three vague and casual references to a previous reference, no less vague and casual, to "self-government" for Ireland, or because Unionists endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to draw attention to the dangers involved in the Parliament Act, is adding studied insolence to constitutional outrage.

The real essence of the situation is that, beneath the old phrases of popular government, we are face to face with an entirely new and revolutionary political theory. And that theory is that those who have sufficient control of a political "machine," or of two or more "machines," to enable them, singly or in coalition, to maintain a majority in the House of Commons, are entitled to carry any legislation whatever, whether it affects some trifling interest or whether it breaks up the whole Constitution, whether it has been brought before the people or not, whether the opposition to it is weak and superficial or strong and passionately intense—and to carry it without any reference to the electorate. Such a theory destroys the whole essence of free government, in other words, government by the general will and consent, and puts

in its place an unrestricted tyranny, which is none the less a tyranny because those who exercise it or who are its obedient instruments have on one ground or another secured election to Parliament. Such an unscrupulous and ruthless utilisation of electoral advantage as is implied in the passage of Home Rule under the provisions of the Parliament Act would not be possible in any other civilised country, and it cannot and must not be possible here.

The issue before the Unionist Party is perfectly clear. The revolution known as the Parliament Act, and the further revolution known as Home Rule, for the sake of which that Act was devised, must at all costs be prevented from coming into operation. If humanly possible, that end must be achieved on ordinary Constitutional lines by the defeat of the Government within the two years delay before the provisions of the Parliament Act take effect. By the repeal of the Parliament Act, by the creation of a Second Chamber strengthened in composition and in powers, and by the provision of adequate safeguards for the maintenance of the nation's right of veto, we must then make it absolutely impossible for a measure like Home Rule to pass, unless, after fullest discussion in both Houses, it has secured the assent of a majority of the electorate either through a Referendum or at a General Election.

But it is necessary to face the alternative possibility, and to consider what will be the duty of Unionists if by any chance they should fail to turn out the Government within two years and Home Rule should pass into law under the provisions of the Parliament Act. On the day on which that happens Ulster will set up a provisional Government in disregard of the law passed under those circumstances. What will Unionists do then? Will they treat the Home Rule Act as valid? If so, then they are bound to support the Government in any measure it may take for the forcible suppression of Ulster. But if not, if Unionists hold that Ulster is right in refusing to recognise the validity of the

Coalition decree, even if the Coalition has held together for two years, then they are in honour and duty bound to support Ulster by every means at their disposal. There can be no such thing as civil war in compartments. There can be no measure which will not be justifiable if it is necessary to prevent Ulster from being crushed. I do not believe that things will ever come to that pass. But then I believe that the earnestness and determination of Unionists will before that find an easier and happier solution for the crisis, and that the normal working of the Constitution will overthrow the revolutionary cabal which at present threatens the nation with disaster. Meanwhile for Unionists in Great Britain, as in Ireland, there can be only one decision as to the maintenance of the Union. "We will not have Home Rule."

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